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THE ROAD TO POWER

LORD NUFFIELD challenged John Brown to go to Russia and *The Road to Power* is the record of his amazing adventures since he returned—to refuse Lord Nuffield's cheque. The masks are torn off every European dictatorship in this real-life record of life among the workers in Central Europe, Italy and the Balkans. John Brown describes his interviews with the dictators and their Ministers and gives graphic pictures of the Palestine rebellion and the Spanish war.

In the thick of the fighting in the Near East he found undeniable evidence of the Italian propaganda campaign among the Arabs. He recrossed the Russian frontier defying the Soviet ban imposed after his 1934 visit and escaped again. His last book was banned by personal order of Mussolini, and here he describes the atmosphere of intrigue in the inner circles of the Fascist chiefs.

In America he met Roosevelt, Governor-General Lord Tweedsmuir, and their Ministers, studied crime problems at Chicago police headquarters, met friends of Al Capone, film stars, millionaires, visited Father Divine in " Heaven No. 1," was on the strike fronts in Illinois and Michigan, and lived among the American workers to find out their ideas.

In Spain he was on three fronts after being banned from rebel territory by order of General Franco. He evaded Franco's ban, and after visiting the rebel capital was in the bloody anarchist rising in Barcelona, where he was arrested and confined in the Red headquarters. After being in Madrid he investigated the extent of intervention on both sides, and discovered who were really pulling the strings behind Franco and Prieto.

In the final chapters he describes back-stage British politics and his own experiences as a parliamentary candidate. A careful analysis of British foreign policy ends with a challenging alternative. Britain, he believes, must replace the uncertain and discredited policies of yesterday with a bold forward policy at home and abroad which will revive the ideals and plans of Rhodes and the great imperialists. The British Empire, he believes, is the only hope of the toiling masses being hushed by the totalitarian dictators.

But he is thinking of the Empire with a new policy and a new leadership—essentially of the rising generation. He boldly challenges the Church personnel for their failure to maintain the living spirit of Christianity in the hearts of the people. This book is quite certainly the first of its kind that has been published in this country since the Great War—it is tremendously alive, and the challenging Road to Power policy for the British Commonwealth that is indicated strikes a new and resounding note in these pessimistic days.

By the same Author

I WAS A TRAMP
I SAW FOR MYSELF

John Brown

THE ROAD TO POWER

SECOND IMPRESSION

SELWYN & BLOUNT, PATERNOSTER HOUSE
PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4

Made and Printed in Great Britain at
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.
1937

TO THE YOUTH OF
THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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FOREWORD

THIS IS NOT A RECORD OF TRAVEL BUT OF A SEARCH for the truth which lies behind the propaganda masks abroad and hypocritical shams at home.

I shall lose many friends because of this book, in which I declare myself a Socialist who hates Communism, who has always put his own country first, and who believes that on its future depends the happiness and freedom of all working men and women throughout the world.

To-day I am more firmly convinced than ever that Britain must find a Third Way—a Road to Power—between Fascism and Communism. This Third Way will mean the fall of many false idols and the ruthless destruction of everything that stands in the road of our national and imperial development.

Democracy is scoffed at to-day as feeble. The initiative has passed to the totalitarian governments. But I believe in democracy's future because I believe in its past—in the men of to-morrow because of the men of yesterday.

This book is a gauntlet that I fling in the faces of the croakers and cynics.

It is not fashionable to-day to declare oneself patriotic and imperialistic, but if I were the only man in the State to make such an affirmation, I should deem this the appropriate hour.

JOHN BROWN.

PART ONE

ABROAD

CHAPTER ONE

ITALY : AMONG THE WORKERS

BEFORE GOING TO ITALY I OBTAINED INTRODUCTIONS to Fascist leaders in various provinces from Mussolini's personal friends in London. I had the addresses of leaders of the underground opposition movement, and I met a number of them in Paris. Among them was Carlo Rosselli, leader of the exiles, and editor of *Liberta e Giustizia*. Rosselli and his brother were afterwards stabbed to death in 1937 on the anniversary of the Matteotti murder. He had friends among the Rome officials who gave him confidential information, such as Mussolini's secret orders to the Italian Press, and it was notorious that the continued publication of these documents was a source of great embarrassment to Mussolini and his foreign ministry.

Count Sforza, the former Foreign Minister, now residing in Brussels, proved apprehensive about the possibility of messages being " tapped " by Fascist spies, and his suspicions were well founded, for in Paris several men who claimed to have escaped from Italian *confinos* (concentration camps), and who had been accepted by the exiles, had later proved to be agents of the M.V.S.N. (*Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*), secret police.

The Italian opposition leaders, long since banned

from their own country, talked glibly of a fast-crumbling Fascist regime, and of a network of underground " cells " across the peninsula.

I was not impressed by the Paris exiles. Like other political refugees I had met, they were willing and even anxious to discuss ideas and points of doctrine until the small hours.

Questions of organisation, communications, transport, finance, and newspaper circulation were dismissed in a few words. Good intentions, high ideals, facile speech, a fondness for the humbler things of life—these may be admirable qualities, but they make a poor recipe for leadership unless they are accompanied by a certain hardness of spirit and practical outlook.

Crossing the Italian frontier at Ventimiglia I was made immediately conscious of the suppression of free speech when two priests who had travelled in the same train were refused permission to pass the barrier and held up for inquiries.

First impressions were of a widespread militarisation, for large wall posters announced the mobilisation of new classes of reservists. Notices asking for volunteers for the Abyssinian force were headed " For National Security and Defence," and there were coloured bills advertising the advantages of a career in the artillery.

In San Remo I stayed at the Grand Hotel, once headquarters of the Allied politicians gathered to re-patch the map of Europe. Wealthy Germans there spoke of the " great achievements " wrought by Fascism, but when I asked them for details they spoke vaguely about punctual trains, new public buildings, and the absence of beggars.

The achievements had clearly not extended themselves to the working class quarters of the town, and I visited sunless hovels in the Piazza San Sebastiano quarter that would never have been tolerated in the western countries. There had been hardly any building of working-class houses since pre-war days—that was certain.

The municipal offices were occupied by numerous

officials, whose working hours seemed remarkably short.

There is a small colony of Russians in the town, and at the Villa Flora I met Princess Obolensky and her husband, a former colonel of the Imperial Guard, who told me of their experiences while escaping from the Bolsheviks, and demanded the latest news from their own country.

I visited several of the Riviera towns, passing companies of soldiers in training on the roads every day. Unemployment was obviously very great throughout Liguria, but in Genoa the big munition works was working at full capacity, and there was an atmosphere of optimism. The optimism was, however, confined to Genoa, and middle-class people talked frequently about the new increases in taxation. Even in the small towns of the north the piazzas were full of workless men, who lounged about in the sunshine through most of the day. War talk was in the air, and the newspapers appeared to be devoting a little more space each week to the reports of " new Abyssinian atrocities."

In spite of the florid statements of the exiles, there were no signs, on or under the surface, of opposition to the regime. But the workers I met had no illusions about the country's economic position, in spite of the hard-working officials of the Propaganda Ministry.

On to Rome, and then south as far as Sicily, meeting the Fascist chiefs, but concentrating my attention upon the workers and peasants. Discussing the economic situation, an Italian staff officer in Rome said to me : " If we cannot give them bread we can give them glory ! " The cynicism certainly summarised the attitude of some of the political leaders I interviewed.

But there was no consciousness of this outlook of the leaders among the workers and peasants. For good or evil, Mussolini had practically succeeded in his declared aim of welding the Italian people into a solid and undissenting mass. The extraordinary provincial-mindedness of most Italians has helped the dictator in

this work. Frequently in England I have met people with an exceedingly limited knowledge of political affairs, revealed sometimes by their ignorance of the names of the leading Ministers. But this is nothing to the ignorance of the peasants of, say, Calabria and Sicily. To them Mussolini is the whole government—a dictator personally supervising every department of state. Needless to say, the legend is fostered by every artifice of scientific propaganda.

Living in the tiny Sicilian villages in the foothills of Etna, the narrowness of rural life was driven home to me with a force that could never have emerged from books. Sometimes I had a strong feeling that I was seeing Western Europe as it was a century ago—an illusion heightened by the poverty of communications and the absence of familiar machines and noises.

In some parts of Sicily and the south hot meals are unknown for half the year, the workers subsisting on a diet that would quickly drive the German or British worker into revolt. Many families could not even afford the cheap communal wine, and the standard of life of the small farmers was below that of agricultural labourers in England.

In Nicolosi I heard rumours of the re-emergence of the Mafia, which was suppressed shortly after the March on Rome. Peasant conditions in southern Italy were very much worse than I had expected. Huge *latifundia* survive, most of them managed for landlords in the north by agents and stewards. On these estates thousands of workers are employed at wages amounting to about a shilling a day. Money wages are a little better in the sulphur mines near Catania, but labour conditions are much worse, and as a result of a series of incidents the secret police net had been tightened up.

Although feeling is strong against absentee landlordism I do not believe it will cause any general outbreak, for the ablest men in each village are usually given some post and a small retainer by the Fascist Party. In 1934 there were occasional demonstrations and riots, but these

never attained more than local importance, and the severe examples made of the ringleaders will not soon be forgotten.

In Calatabiano I found women working a 100-hour week for the equivalent of half a crown, while their husbands earned only three-halfpence per hour. Even this was a higher rate than the penny per hour paid to conscripted labourers working on new roads in Calabria. I say "conscripted," as men were given the choice of losing unemployment benefit or taking the work.

In the unemployed queues at Naples I heard many complaints about this kind of labour. Advances are made from the national unemployment insurance fund to local authorities, but no specifications are made as to the wage rates or labour conditions that can be ordered by the authority. As all advances must be repaid in two years the schemes become in practice mere conscriptions of unemployed men for such work as road-making, sanitation, and land reclamation.

Before unemployment benefit can be drawn twenty-four fortnightly contributions must have been paid by claimants in the preceding two years. Benefit is adjusted to wages previously earned, in this way :

Wages of not more than 4 lire a day :	Benefit of 2s.	per week
,, between 4 and 8 lire a day :	,, 3s. 3d.	,,
,, over 8 lire a day :	,, 5s.	,,

After drawing benefit for ninety days claimants are automatically struck off the "live" register, which explained the comparative stability of the Italian unemployment totals at a time when economy was badly hit.

The ninety days benefit period is extended to one hundred and twenty days if a worker can show thirty-six fortnightly stamps on his cards in the previous two years —but that is the legal maximum, which cannot be exceeded, and "uncovenanted" benefit is unknown. After being removed from the unemployment list men

are compelled to go to the local relief office, from which they receive small grants of money or goods.

It may be asked—how do the unemployed survive on such sums? The answer is chiefly to be found in the poor standard of life and the lowness of rents. The Italian conception of family life is also an important factor—all members of a family automatically contributing to the support of unlucky relatives. Unemployed men are also not debarred from earning small sums in any way possible.

Claimants for benefit, who sign daily at the local office, are compelled to show the certificate of discharge from their previous employer, which details the amount of wages earned, motive of discharge, etc. The power this practice places in the hands of unscrupulous employers is obvious, while another provision states that *any* employment offer made by the labour bureau must be accepted. There is a similar waiting period to that enforced in Britain, and "vocational instruction" is obligatory if required by the authorities.

After benefit has been exhausted a man is compelled to show twelve more fortnightly insurance stamps before making a fresh claim. An important point that was still being discussed by the party groups was the disqualification for benefit of workers who had left their jobs through a dispute with their employers.

Benefit was often paid at post offices in the rural areas, and could be, and was, obtained in kind if desired. One man drew his five shillings benefit in milk, bread, and meat, which he obtained with a voucher from a shopkeeper nominated by the local *Fascio*. The relief system, which functions quite efficiently, is run by officials, invariably prominent party members, who are informed by the labour bureaux of the names and addresses of all workers who have been unemployed for more than a month.

All that I heard of the unemployment scheme ran so counter to the reports of raised status of the workers that have been diffused by Fascist propagandists in the last

few years that I took special pains to investigate labour conditions in various provinces.

It is, of course, well known that freedom of combination is a thing of the past, but the strictness with which attempts are suppressed is less familiar. One shop foreman told me that any group of three or more workers who even made a protest which might lead to a strike or stoppage were liable to minimum sentences of a year's imprisonment. In practice this provision of the labour code is rarely enforced, but the fact of its existence has the desired effect.

Wages have been falling steadily for the last few years. According to the official statistics, hourly monetary earnings have dropped by 19 per cent since 1929.

The attempts to deal with rapidly-growing unemployment in 1934–5 by enforcing a shorter working week in big industrial plants in the north also tended to depress wage rates. Professor Mortara, one of the leading Italian statisticians, has estimated that the national income fell by at least 35 per cent in the first ten years of Fascism (*Prospettive Economica*, 1933, p. 615). In the same period the national debt was increased by 57,371 million lire. Shortly before the outbreak of the Abyssinian war a member of the Chamber of Deputies, E. Sertoli, declared in a debate that in many cases wage rates were below those paid in 1914, and complained of the rising cost of living.

Generally speaking it can be maintained that the level of real wages in certain parts of the north was slightly higher in early 1935 than in 1922. This position has been affected, however, by the war. While in the centre provinces and the south the peasants—who form 80 per cent of the population—admit that they are no better off than their parents.

In Italy the slump came later than in the rest of Europe, and its worst effects did not begin to emerge until the end of 1932. Unemployment climbed steeply, and a series of decrees cut the wages of sections of workers. The rigidity of financial policy was a special

factor. Mussolini's speech at Pesaro in 1926, when he declared that the lira would be defended " to the last drop of blood," was commemorated in a stone monument and a score of books, and has led him into a great deal of trouble. Pesaro taught him a lesson, and it is significant that he never makes economic forecasts in his speeches to-day.

After 1931 Italy's adhesion to the gold standard seriously affected the export trade, and deputations of business men went to Rome to appeal for a " revised " policy. In a democratically-ruled country a Prime Minister could admit a mistake and ask for a vote of confidence, or appeal to the country. He could also place the weight of a financial policy decision upon his finance minister. But every Italian believes that it is Mussolini who makes all major decisions, and for the Prime Minister to go off gold after pledging his word so solemnly would have shocked public opinion as much as the Matteotti crisis in 1924. As events turned out, Italy was driven off the gold standard long before the official devaluation declared after the war.

The years 1934 and 1935 saw a rapid deepening of the crisis, and the search for some new project that would divert attention from internal affairs. Some business men in Milan, who have been compelled to stand by while their orders from abroad steadily diminished, long before the application of sanctions, are convinced that it is the economic situation that drove Mussolini into the Abyssinian adventure. One of them told me that, having gambled the regime on military victory, the Duce would have to see his schemes through to the end, even if they meant a new European war.

Many people are puzzled by the fact that Italy's financial position has for long been described as unstable, while at the same time a big programme of public works and war preparations was being planned and carried out.

I studied this problem when I visited Rome, and questioned leading officials of the Ministries of Finance

and Corporations. They ridiculed the " instability " stories, which they declared had been invented by foreign journalists and exiles, and supplied me with a large amount of information and statistics.

After exploring their reports, however, I found that there was a total deficit of 3,646 million lire in the national budget for the four-year period ending June 30, 1932. The 1932–6 budgets showed a gross deficit of 13,425 million lire, plus the war expenditure !

Much of the extraordinary expenditure had been met by using up the gold reserve, but the public works programme had been chiefly financed through various " private " credit institutes—on the boards of which the Government had a majority of seats—and it was necessary to trace one's way through a labyrinth of figures to discover what had really happened. But the effort was worth while, for I discovered conclusively that Mussolini was operating a new form of financial policy. His Government has been carrying on many of its activities by creating a vast mass of " posterity debt " ! Payments are not made out of revenue or borrowings, as is the usual practice, but by promising creditors increasing instalments of their bills over a period of years, which varies from ten to fifty !

The reports of the Senate finance committee showed that down to February 28, 1933, the amount of this " posterity debt " was 74,315 million lire. To-day, of course, it is much greater as a result of the war. The annuities due on these debts will naturally increase with the passing of time, so that Italy is faced with the prospect of indefinite financial crisis—it amounts to nothing else—unless large supplies of valuables can be acquired by the Government or there is a sudden and marked rise in economic prosperity—which Mussolini himself never prophesied even before 1931. The possibility of repudiation can, I think, be dismissed, as this would be a fatal blow to the regime.

The credit institutes have been exceedingly valuable in operating this policy of " posterity budgeting "—as

most of the expensive public works schemes could be financed on promises and prestige, without a single item appearing for examination in the national budget.

Certainly there is a great opportunity for some young economist in investigating the organisation and workings of the *parastatale*, as these semi-official credit institutes are called.

Not all the *parastatale* are new organisations. When the note issue privileges of the Bank of Naples and the Bank of Sicily were abrogated in 1926 the Government gave them semi-official status for credits. This also happened in the case of the S. Paul's Institute of Turin, which was founded four centuries ago, and the National Labour Bank, a pre-war co-operative organisation. The most important institutes, however, are of post-1926 creation.

The extent of their operations can be gathered from the total of capital and reserves of these bodies—4,700 million lire, according to the General Fascist Confederation of Italian Industries.

The national budget has not been balanced since 1925, and the deficit for 1935 was estimated at over 2,000 million lire before the war began ! Nor must the fact be overlooked that at the end of 1934 the Government issued four-year treasury bonds to the value of 2,000 million lire.

Evidence of financial instability, however, is not conclusive proof of a collapsing regime. To a certain extent this adventurous budgeting has been forced upon Mussolini and his lieutenants. In the atmosphere in which power was secured by the Fascist Party, flamboyant promises could not be resisted, and it was then necessary to implement some of these to silence the opposition. Once having adopted theatricalism and hysterical patriotic demagogy, it is practically impossible for a politician or a party to turn back. To do so would be to lose supporters and to dampen the enthusiasm that has been created by the flags, slogans, and bands. Mussolini himself has stated that it is necessary

for him to produce continual " achievements " in the manner of a conjurer to maintain his reputation.

Human weakness being what it is, it is undeniable that more is demanded of the man who rises to power from the ranks than from those who, to use Professor Laski's brilliant phrase, " have only to be, in order to become." The policy of " bread and circuses " has been greatly strengthened during the last four years. Its chief agent is the O.N.D., as the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (National Afterwork Association) is usually called. No less than six million workers now take part in the sports activities of this body, which are closely linked with militia training, all sports organisations being under the control of the National Defence Committee.

Privately-organised sport has now practically disappeared from Italy, and the O.N.D. organises football, running, walking, light athletics, " Tamburello," tug-of-war, boxing, bowls, ski-ing, and fencing.

Big competitions are often held in military stadia, and army generals present the cups and prizes. When I interviewed the O.N.D. chief at the Palazzo Littorio in Rome he told me his outside activities were taking up more and more of his time. He had just flown back from Bologna, where he had reviewed a parade of several thousand young Fascists.

A few days later I was in Bologna, where I attended a sports meeting. Five thousand children took part in mass physical training, and one of the features was a march round the arena by the " Sons of the Wolf "—boy Fascists between six and eight years old, who wear the eagle-crested fez and black shirt. Military marches, speeches, Roman salutes, firework displays, and community singing of " Giovinezza " were other items of the programme. The Bologna demonstration was typical of what I saw in other towns, and of what is continually taking place throughout the peninsula, and no pains are being spared to saturate the rising generation with militarism. A good example of this is provided by the song " Giovinezza," which is sung at all Fascist meetings.

Here is an excerpt from the new version, which has been approved by the Duce.

From Verse 3 :

Within the Italian frontier
Italians have been remade
Remade by Mussolini
For the war of to-morrow !

The Hymn of Fascist Youth also contains such lines as :

Weapons and flags of the ancient heroes
For Italy, O Duce ! We shall flash in the sun !

People who have not been to Italy recently will find it difficult to realise just how big a part demonstrations and ceremonies have come to play in the life of the nation. From the *Casa del Fascio* in tiny Giardini to the huge Palazzo Littorio in Rome there is the same continual round of anniversaries, parades, medal-presentations, prize-givings, exhibitions, and so on.

The gravity of the economic situation was, of course, obvious to the leaders long before sanctions were applied, and war difficulties were touched on by Mussolini in his speech to the Milan workers as long ago as October 6, 1934. According to the League of Nations monthly statistical bulletin, the monthly average of Italian exports in million lire dropped from 1,555 in 1926 to 408 in 1933. Exports were practically negligible in 1935.

One textile manufacturer in Milan told me that the collapse of exports was inevitable after Mussolini fixed the gold value of the lira at a figure nearly 25 per cent higher than that of the French franc in 1927.

Increasing unemployment, the calling up of key men, and raised taxation had intensified the troubles of the industrial and commercial classes. One of the chief grumbles of the Milan employers, I found, was the continual interference with their work by officials of the Ministry of Corporations. These officials, many of whom are appointed, according to common gossip,

through their relationship or friendship with party leaders, have the right to enter any factory or office, and can demand the production of books and documents. Their intrusions and blunders, coming on top of the crisis and the war talk, had roused the business men as nothing had done since the occupation of the factories in 1920.

But they contented themselves with abuse of the officials and Ministers and the corporative system in general. Against Mussolini himself I noticed that none of them would ever say a word—not one of those subtle nuances or sardonic jokes in which the Italian mind delights. Their ridicule of corporativism came as a slight surprise to me, in view of the extensive publicity secured abroad for the experiments.

But in Rome I found that labourers with whom I was staying in the Piazza Cavour did not even know the rates and hour-schedules for their job that were registered at the Ministry, and laughed when I talked of the 40-hour week and the joint meetings of the employers and employees. The registered statistics, they told me, had no relation to wages paid and hours worked. There was no difficulty in proving that this was true of other industries besides building. In southern Italy the corporations are so little regarded by the workers, that it is often difficult to find candidates for the provincial council elections.

All decisions of the corporations must be ratified by the general assembly of the National Council of Corporations, and the supremacy of the Government is assured by the proviso that general assembly resolutions or recommendations are only legal if embodied in a decree issued by the Prime Minister !

The two registered corporations which provide medium and long-term credit to industry, the *Istituto Mobiliare* and the *Istituto di Ricostruzione*, had also been given new powers. Both institutes are allowed to issue debentures, the *Istituto Mobiliare* up to ten times its subscribed capital, and the *Istituto di Ricostruzione* to an

unlimited extent. They can also issue bonds representing stock holdings for which they are trustees, and have various other privileges.

Despite this unstable economic structure and widespread depression there was no suggestion anywhere of a political challenge to the Government. The party grip was too tight. Nevertheless, the deplorable conditions under which millions of workers toil and live remains a factor of potential importance.

How bad these conditions are is rarely recognised by foreign tourists. At San Remo I wondered how many strollers on the Corso Imperatrice knew how their hotel workers lived, or had seen the terrible crowded slums in the Via Pietro Calvi or the Piazza S. Siro quarter, where people are crammed into broken-down tenements, the doors of which open on narrow passages into which the sun never shines.

And how many Naples visitors see the Piazza di Mercato area, where thousands of workers live in ancient barrack-like buildings and filthy hovels. It is not that these conditions are exceptional. They are typical of every town in Italy, where rehousing and slum clearance have lagged far behind the achievements of the western countries. The few rehousing schemes that have been completed, such as those in Rome and Milan, have been designed to meet the needs of the higher-paid technicians and professional workers. The industrial workers simply cannot afford the rents charged for the new flats. And it is significant that all the new housing schemes had been centred in the " tourist cities " !

Yet it would be wrong to say that discontent is widespread. The type of man who would be most likely to make trouble is definitely sought for by the Fascist Party so that he can be drawn into support of the regime. Two of the most fertile training-grounds for reformers, journalism and school-teaching, are closed to all who refuse complete subservience to the party.

Certainly Mussolini has not read Machiavelli for nothing. Were the subtle Florentine alive to-day he

might well write an appendix to his classic entitled " The Prince as Bluffer."

Most biographers and interviewers of the Italian Premier have misinterpreted him because they were far below him in intellectual capacity. His nature is clearly revealed in his talks with Emil Ludwig, probably the first interviewer to meet him on level terms. In these talks Mussolini displayed the contempt for the masses, the megalomania, brutality, and amoral ambition that one would expect from a man with a police record in Switzerland, who sold himself to the French Government (the go-between is now a French Communist leader !) in 1915, and who offered to turn over the Fascist squads to Buozzi, the trade union leader, before accepting the offer of the employers' organisations in 1922, and copies of whose atheist book, *L'Homme et la Divinité*, are still being hunted down for destruction by his agents in Switzerland. I say these things not from malice but because they are demonstrably true, and have been recounted to me by men on whose evidence I can depend—present and former associates of the Premier. Their general publication is only hindered by diplomatic usage.

On two occasions in the French courts cases have been affected by the awkward revelations about such episodes.

As to the Milan and Lausanne scandals, personally confirmed to me by Dr. Angelica Balabanoff, former Secretary of the First International and collaborator with Mussolini on *Avanti* before the war, these were only of importance to Mussolini personally, and I have no wish to enlarge on the early misadventures of any man.

CHAPTER TWO

ITALY: THE LEADERS—AND THE ARMY

I WAS ANXIOUS TO DISCOVER THE ATTITUDE OF THE Church to the regime, and visited several Catholic leaders. I was also received in special audience by the Pope at the Vatican Palace, two concessions being made to me in that I am not a Catholic and had brought no evening clothes—the normal dress for audiences—with me to Rome. I was attended by a guard of halberdiers in mediæval uniform under Baron d'Altishofen, of the Swiss Guard, whom I had met the day previous. Pius XI, clad in a white soutane, with a moiré belt, his feet in red slippers, was accompanied by an escort of Noble Guards and chamberlains, these latter in picturesque uniforms, when I met him in the Throne Room. In spite of his advanced years he retained the springy step of a young man, which recalled his athletic feats of half a century ago, and gave no indication of the illness that was soon to attack him. His face expresses great intellectuality, firmness and benignity, and in spite of the simplicity of his manners and ideas, he retained the dignity suitable to his exalted office.

The Pope enjoys giving audiences, and described them as his "only open window on the world." He follows the example of Leo XIII in frequently stopping to speak to someone in the smaller groups of audiences, and he loves to guess the nationality of his visitors. He surrounds himself with no mystery or glamour, and his force of character stands out nowhere so clearly as in his daily routine. Rising at 5 a.m., he spends the next

hour in prayer, followed by a short walk in the garden or loggia. At eight the ordinary Roman breakfast of buttered rolls and coffee is served. The Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, is received about nine, and gives the Pope details of the reports made to him by nuncios and legates. Before withdrawing the Cardinal propounds important questions requiring immediate decisions.

The Pope takes a great interest in the newspapers, and himself reads several Italian papers, having digests of the others read to him during meals. Whenever he has any free time he devotes himself to books and literary conversation. His favourite foreign language is French, although he speaks several others.

Relations between the Vatican and the Palazzo Venezia were smooth, but there was a danger of a fresh outbreak at any moment, for atheist tendencies were emerging in the *Avanguardisti* and University Fascist organisations, while the cynical unscrupulousness of the politicians had aroused some of the more courageous priests to denunciation from the pulpit. The Vatican had also recognised the sinister force of the financial clauses in the Lateran Treaty, which aim at bringing an indirect and insidious pressure on Papal policy if this should threaten to clash with that of the Italian State.

I first saw Mussolini at the Festival of Labour demonstration in the Piazza Venezia. The Piazza was closed to visitors by the *Carabinieri*, but I joined the Savoy group of the O.N.D., and marched to a place in front of the velvet-covered speakers' dais under their eagle. Various Rome and provincial contingents of soldiers, militia and civilians marched in behind their bands, and by midday the square was packed tight. Mussolini, in the uniform of a militia corporal, was greeted with great enthusiasm when he left his Palace to walk the few yards to the dais. He is short—5 feet 6 inches—and is not nearly so impressive a figure at close quarters as in photographs. As usual, he was accompanied by men of medium stature, and he paid particular attention to the cameramen present, who were directed by an adjutant to stand

below the dais—so that all pictures and news-reels would be taken from the angles required. The Premier, after noting that these manœuvres were correctly performed, began his speech, which lasted only a few minutes. It was the usual encomium of the Fascist regime and its links with Rome. There were one or two references to benefits conferred on the workers, but these did not occasion any response from the crowd, and there was a marked silence during his references to the Corporations. During the remainder of his speech, however, he paused deliberately at every second or third sentence, and at once the young " Sons of the Wolf" (junior Fascists), *Balilla* (boys aged eight to fourteen), and *Avanguardisti* (boys fourteen to eighteen) raised the cries: " *Viva Il Duce*," and one band even got through the opening bars of " Giovinezza."

When he concluded with the inevitable references to the resurrection of the Roman Empire and the new era of glory and power that was soon to be inaugurated, there was a general ovation and the bands struck up, the eagles were raised, and the soldiers held their rifles in the air.

It was now time to present the much-publicised old-age pensions to the " veterans of industry."

In Britain old-age pensions of ten shillings are handed over on Fridays, in prosaic post offices in a prosaic manner, for it is difficult to inject romance into the atmosphere of a British post office. Not so in Italy. Pensions are few, being only awarded to people " approved and recommended " by the Party, and they are also small—usually half a crown a week. But there is no lack of excitement, and one cannot have everything.

The beneficiaries, who had been placed at the back of the huge crowd, were escorted through the centre aisle and led up the steps of the dais, where Mussolini saluted them and presented them with huge parchments, which bore a long appreciation of their services to the State and a short but clear token of the amount payable. Most of the recipients were very aged, and some had

to be supported on the platform. But the numerous Fascist officers seemed accustomed to handling the infirm, and those who forgot to salute, tried to shake hands, or turned back instead of turning left were bundled away with commendable celerity, gripping their rolls of paper.

Mussolini was obviously anxious to terminate these proceedings, and did not hesitate to push away some garrulous old fellows, to the amusement of the crowd.

The ceremony was soon over and the trembling pensioners were shepherded together. After a careful look at the cameramen, Mussolini went inside the Palace, but soon appeared on the balcony above in response to the chorus of *Duce ! Duce !* He took three salutes, much as a *prima donna* would take curtain calls, reserving a smile for the last appearance. Afterwards, when the crowd continued to shout—for it was still barely lunch-time—a scowling, beetle-browed adjutant reopened the balcony window and with most emphatic gestures—worthy of an Irving—signified his opinion that it was high time everyone went about his business.

At the British Embassy, from whose courteous officials I received valuable advice and help on this and on another visit to Rome, I met the brilliant young Gladwyn Jebb and the suave, widely-experienced Press attaché, Sir William McClure. Sir William advised me to make the usual first call on Propaganda Secretary Grazzi, former Minister to Venezuela, and I did so.

In the basement of the Ministry I found propaganda literature about Fascism in various languages—" ready for the journalists and publicists who come here, so they will have no trouble," an official told me. I asked him in how many languages the books were printed. " Seven." " Only seven ? " " Yes ; but, then, we have not organised this department properly yet ! "

Young people were not allowed to use the lift of the Ministry, as on the instructions of Mussolini's son-in-law Count Ciano, now Foreign Minister, this was reserved for the old and infirm. As there were many flights of stairs to climb, this example of Fascist efficiency was

anything but popular with the officials, but the Count, I learned, was fond of such little tricks. Ciano, ambitious, pushing and swaggering, has been ably seconded by his wife in his promotion bids, and in spite of personal unpopularity in Rome he is " mentioned " as a possible successor of the Premier.

Grazzi told me of his adventures in Central America, where he had spent several years before being called to Rome, but did not enlarge on the political situation. He arranged several interviews with leading officials, and sent me to the big Ministry of Corporations across the road, where I was joined by Odon Por. Odon Por, who is now editor of a well-known Rome journal, was on the staff of *Avanti* with Mussolini before the war, and he told me he still had some of his old articles—with Mussolini's headlines across the top. On the previous occasion on which I had met Por he was being asked some very awkward questions by G. D. H. Cole about the strange changes in the Fascist programme between 1919–22, and he had answered with difficulty and in halting and uncertain English. Now I was surprised to find that his English was very fluent, and he told me he had worked in England before the war, but I made no comment.

At the Corporations Ministry I met Dr. Nasti and other officials, who had a great deal to say about Corporative theory and literature. But they were more than vague—they were nebulous—about their actual day to day functions—this was clearly a subject to avoid. Actually, hundreds of friends and relatives of Fascist leaders have been given safe berths in this building, but there has been no planning of industry or serious economic change apart from the debasement of labour conditions and the destruction of the trade unions. The Corporate State does not and never has existed, although a skeleton and a platform has been created. Mussolini has made several promises about giving the Corporations control of the country, but they have remained promises—and potential threats to wave at the employers should they prove unmalleable.

Roman society is considerably more democratic than was the case only ten years ago, and though it is still necessary to observe formalities that would be smiled at in the west, there are no longer any rigid barriers between the classes. But at all parties I attended where there was to be any freedom of discussion, the guests were always carefully chosen, for the Italian secret police is no imaginary bogy but a very efficient network of ears and eyes.

At one small party, which was attended by Mr. Waterfield, the *Times* correspondent, prominent officials spoke with a frankness that English radicals would never have believed possible. They made it very clear to me that *they* were not bluffed by any of the propaganda and window-dressing presented to the masses and to the news-reel companies and newspapers of the world. I was to meet this attitude again, for it is fairly common among those closest to the leaders, who are in daily contact with the intrigues and backdoor conspiracies which accompany dictatorship.

These men, highly educated, with a typically Italian delicacy of perception and ironic cynicism, have been faced with a terrible choice, to maintain their democratic faith and intellectual integrity and go into exile, or to take service on the Barnumesque Fascist band-wagon, behind a crew of amoral political mercenaries, most of whom have served long prison terms. Human nature being what it is, they have taken the line of least resistance, and are as careful as anyone else to be "orthodox" during working hours and in public. But when an opportunity presents itself, such as a private party of friends behind closed doors, they pour out stories that recall the hey-day of the Borgias and the *condottieri*.

At the Littorio Palace I interviewed Achille Starace, Secretary-General of the Fascist Party, member of the Grand Council, General of Militia, and Minister of the Interior. Walking past the armed sentries, I was faced by no fewer than twenty-four reception officials, seated at a long table, who allotted me a military escort after

examining my credentials. After a wait in an ante-room a secretary led me to a door, opened it, saluted, and disappeared. I found myself in a very long audience chamber, which was decorated with huge photographs of Fascist meetings. In a corner was a huge plaster of paris bust of the Premier, and on my left was a revolving "photo tower," of the kind seen in stationer's shops, but about ten feet high. The photographs on this showed Starace and Mussolini at work. The Minister was in the far corner of the room, and I had a long walk to his desk. Starace—middle-aged, of sturdy build—had his black, brilliantined hair brushed back tightly from his forehead —a style fashionable among the leaders. He wore a sports jacket, whipcord breeches, and black riding boots. His bland, mobile face was that of an experienced politician, and his darting eyes searched the faces of his lieutenants when he pressed a button and they rushed in, to stand at attention, whispering only, "*Si, Eccelenza. Si, Eccelenza.*"

Starace assured me that he was only a "rubber stamp" expressing the decisions of Mussolini, but when I told him I did not believe that he laughed. The world, he said, knew nothing of himself—outside Italy only Mussolini's name was mentioned. He spoke of his strenuous activities on behalf of the Party, which took him to every part of the peninsula—starting ski races in the northern Alps and addressing a meeting in Sicily. Fortunately for him the aeroplane had annihilated distance, and he had just flown from Bologna, where he had been addressing meetings and reviewing troops. We discussed these and other party activities. I asked him about the possibilities of opposition organisations, and he laughed. "Impossible," he cried—the Party had too firm a hold.

Opposition organisations were burned out, he declared. Starace impressed me as cynical to a degree, ruthless and determined, and one Party faction hopes that he will one day succeed Mussolini.

In the ceremony he maintains, Starace is approached,

but not rivalled, by Edmondo Rossoni, Minister of Agriculture, and who, as Vice-President of the Grand Council, acted as Mussolini's deputy.

Broad, square-faced, clean-shaven, with quick, black eyes, dressed in a dark-grey lounge suit, he looked across his desk and smiled when I asked him about his early days as a "Red" in the United States. There he had been an organiser for a trade union that was in frequent contact with the police, and his life had been one of continual danger and excitement. He had not had "a happy time" in America, he added. It seemed a far cry from the soap-box propagandist to the suave Minister rapping out staccato orders to his secretaries, but to Rossoni it seemed a logical procession. His face glowed when he spoke of his early days. "I was a revolutionary," he said, not without pride, going on to describe how he had recognised the "inevitability" of Mussolini's victory in 1922. His face changed when I spoke of the war—he himself was opposed to war, he said. "It interferes with work." But he switched the conversation to another subject, and I listened to his detailed plans for marsh drainage and the settlement of veterans on the reclaimed soil. The figures he gave me of agricultural conditions in Italy showed that working hours were 25 per cent longer and wages 50 per cent lower than in Britain.

Throughout this talk he was being continually interrupted by telephone calls, each of which he answered with a few curt words, and his manner to his subordinates also had much of the aggressiveness which I had observed elsewhere in successful radicals.

Rossoni and Starace, with Balbo in Libya and Grandi, then in London, were considered in Rome to be the only possible successors to the Premier, although Countess Ciano had other ideas. But only a palace revolution could make the blustering son of Admiral Ciano acceptable to the Party.

Antonio Benni, the Transport Minister, was of quite another type to the Party leaders (or *rases*, as they were

once called). In his early fifties, slightly built, soft-voiced, quietly dressed and spectacled, he had been director of a large electrical machinery works for many years, and was one of the few business men who have enlisted themselves in the service of the new state. It was not long before he became a transport expert, and his own experience as a motorist had guided him in the improvement of road conditions. He was closely observing the English road experiments, he said, although I gathered that he did not think a great deal of them. Certainly he had achieved great success with his system of disciplining pedestrians, while there had been no imposition of speed limits, and the new *autostrada* were deservedly famous.

But most of the other leaders I met have surrounded themselves with the pomp of mediæval dukes, and in their Rome palaces they maintain dozens of servants, orderlies, officials, and guards, besides four or five personal secretaries.

Many capital cities fail to come up to the expectations of the traveller, but Rome is certainly not one of them. The Government has not been slow in realising the great value of the capital as a magnet drawing tourists from all parts of the world, and has rightly discountenanced all grumbling about the large sums laid out on works schemes.

Of all the capitals of Europe, London and Rome are alone in suggesting that internationalism is more than an abstraction. Although the super-national spirit is much more real in the capital of Britain's world-wide empire, surface impressions would yield the palm to Rome. The crowds of bright-garbed priests, the red, yellow, black, and blue uniforms of the soldiers, and the picturesque dress of the visiting peasants add their own special charm to the history that breathes through every street, while one hears the languages of a dozen nations every day.

The Via dell' Impero is the newest attraction, and Romans claim it is the finest road in the world. Running

between the Piazza Venezia, on which is situated Mussolini's palace, and the Colosseum, it is a broad highway which in its sweeping beauty recalls the spacious days of the Cæsars.

The mean little streets which formerly stood in this area have all been cleared away, and the view is nowhere obscured by unsightly advertisements or buildings. Leaving the Venezia Palace, built of stones removed from the Colosseum, I crossed the square towards the Vittoriano monument—a gigantic white structure created to symbolise the new Italy founded in 1870. Hundreds of steps lead up to the "Altar of the Motherland," which is always guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets.

Turning right after passing the Vittoriano, I entered the Via dell' Impero. On the left plots of green flanked Trajan's column, while above were the domes of the churches of Santa Maria di Loreto and Nome di Maria. Behind were the old Roman markets, surmounted by a mediæval tower and ancient buildings.

On the right was the Capitol and the Mamertine Prison, in which S. Peter was confined before martyrdom. Then came the famous arch of Septimus Severus and the Forum of Cæsar, before which is a large bronze statue of the conqueror. This statue is a "show piece," and Italian fathers from the provinces were pointing it out to their children.

Farther on was the Roman Forum, with its world-famous buildings and the vast arches of the Basilica of Maxentius. Across the road was the Forum of Augustus, the Forum of Nerva, and the Piazza Cavour, where I was later to lodge. Demolition work on the houses behind the Piazza was proceeding apace. The road ended at the Colosseum, that symmetrical emblem of ancient Rome, which seems to the imaginative beholder to personify all the virtues and vices of the erstwhile mistress of the world.

Turning right towards the Arch of Constantine, through which a ceaseless stream of cars poured by day and night, I saw a scene of remarkable activity. Scores

of workmen, under the direction of the leading architects and archæologists of the city, were reconstructing the ancient temple of Venus, and the work was being pressed forward with all speed. Labourers, were, I found, often employed on Sundays and holidays, and work continued at night with the aid of large electric lamps.

On the street wall near the Basilica of Maxentius were four large black maps, illustrating the rise of the city from the time of Romulus to that of Trajan, when the Roman empire embraced the greater part of the known world, and these were frequently surrounded by sightseers. The Government had announced its intention of erecting a huge hall for the national youth movement almost immediately opposite these maps. And another project that was being discussed was the erection of a hundred-feet high Colossus of Mussolini in the outer suburbs, the statue to depict him striding over a small hill !

The Colosseum by night has always been a famous spectacle, and its beauty is now enhanced by skilful floodlighting, so that to walk along the new road after midnight is an enchanting experience.

So far as the many other attractions of the Eternal City were concerned, little had been done in the way of enlargement or alteration, but there had been considerable reconstruction and renovation, many of the old monuments being now made visible to the public for the first time in many centuries.

Some of the old palaces have been transformed into Government departments, and in the courtyard of the Palazzo Visconti I found Legion 684 of the *Avanguardisti* in training.

The Governor of Rome, Enrico Bottai, afterwards Governor of Addis Ababa, had announced that his policy would be to preserve the existing monuments, to restore some of the old glories of the city, and to prevent vandalism and the spoiling of attractions through unsightly hoardings or buildings. This augured well for the future of the city. It would, indeed, be a

monstrous imposition if the more raucous manifestations of the scientific age were to introduce themselves into the shadow of S. Peter's, the Catacombs of S. Callixtus, or the palaces of the Cæsars.

I left Rome wishing that the same civic spirit was universal in its application.

Many new buildings had been erected in the previous five years, and among the most interesting were the civic sports stadium and the Foro Mussolini. Dr. Nicolai, the Secretary of the Italian Olympic Games Committee and himself a former Olympic champion, showed me over the sports stadium—a vast arena built on the pattern of an English football ground. The stadium is open all the year round, and when I emerged on one of the upper terraces I found about fifty brown-faced young men below, playing leap-frog.

Dr. Nicolai gave me a letter to Commandant Calavalla, the director of the Foro Mussolini, and it was arranged that I should call there the following day. The Foro Mussolini is a huge physical training academy on the outskirts of the city, and was opened a few years ago by the Prime Minister, who declared that the function of the staff was to train " a new aristocracy for the Fascist State." Outside the gate was a tall obelisk inscribed DUX—commemorating the visit of the Premier.

I was received by the director—middle-aged, clean-shaven, taciturn and modest—a distinguished soldier and one of the leading members of the Senate. He was attended by two military aides, and took me round the various sports grounds. The academy itself, which is entered through a huge arch, is a very modern building of chromium, steel, and concrete. The students—all men in the early twenties—are carefully selected, and must undergo severe tests before they are allowed to commence the two years' course, at the end of which they are " passed out." Holders of the academy diploma are eagerly sought after in all parts of the country, and there can be no doubt that they are playing a big part in building up a " sports consciousness " throughout Italy.

In the centre of the vast grounds owned by the academy is a huge bowl, the outer rim of which is studded with large statues. Calavalla told me that each of these represents one of the cities of Italy, the expression and attitude being a reflex of the special virtues of the inhabitants. Descending the broad concrete steps to the grassy arena, I watched a group of students playing volley-ball. They were sturdy, athletic and bronzed, and from their movements it was easy to see that they were in the pink of physical condition. The commandant shouted to one of the students, who ran towards us at top speed, standing stiffly at attention until he was given his instructions, then running away.

Discipline was very strict, and there was more than a suggestion of Spartan atmosphere about the whole place. Senator Calavalla was anxious to stress the non-military nature of the training given, but it was significant that the arms drill was very smartly performed, while student sentries were armed with rifles and bayonets. On a parade ground a company of men in gymnasium kit were being initiated into the mysteries of platoon drill. Army and militia officers were attached to the Commandant's staff, and supervised the rifle range.

The Foro visit encouraged me to investigate Italy's military position, and in other institutions I found that the Rome atmosphere was duplicated, while in the universities interest in military subjects was artificially stimulated by a dozen ingenious schemes.

Soon after the March on Rome in 1922 Mussolini said that he would make Italy a first-class military power. Certainly no one can deny that he has worked hard to keep that promise. In October, 1922, Italian Army officers were often scoffed at and jeered in the streets—one of the main reasons for their support of the Blackshirts. Officers going on leave in those days were frequently advised to leave their uniforms behind, but respect for the uniform has obviously been fully restored.

South to Sicily, where, as on the mainland, I found that military matters were encroaching on the curriculum

to an extraordinary extent. At Calatabiano School I saw coloured plans of tanks, submarines and aeroplanes on the walls of the junior classrooms, and in Syracuse there were even more blatant examples. What of the Army itself?

British soldiers who served on the Italian front during the world war commented on the difference in physique and morale between the troops from northern and southern Italy. This was by no means the only criticism that was made, and everyone knows that only the stiffening of the line by British contingents saved Italy from being overrun by the Austrians after their overwhelming victory at Caporetto.

In various provinces I had opportunities of seeing Army units in training, and at Naples and Messina I watched sections of the East African force embarking for Massawa. In Naples I also met officers who had been invalided home from the northern front.

One of the impressions I gathered was that the difference between forces recruited in the north and south is not as great as before. The efforts to inculcate a national military pride have been successful to some extent. There were, however, indications that in the case of southern Italy troops this enthusiasm was not very deeply rooted. In Sicily young fellows told me that they were joining up solely because the Colonial service pay (1s. 8d. a day) was so much better than unemployment benefit or communal relief—which they had been drawing since 1933.

The Government had dissipated the poisonous atmosphere which existed between officers and men in 1922, partly through the system of compelling officers up to the rank of captain to take part in daily physical training with their men.

Not far from Rome, in the Appian Way, is a new aerodrome, where I saw some of the latest machines of the Italian Air Force, and watched early morning manœuvres that were impressively efficient. My own slight experience as a pilot showed me how well the

Italians had copied British methods. One of their officers told me how much he and his friends admired the R.A.F., whose pilots had wrested the Schneider Trophy from Italy, and how diligently British training methods are followed.

In Liguria I saw regimental exercises being carried out, as correspondent for a British military journal, and was impressed by the emphasis on mobility. The heavy equipment carried by the British infantryman is eschewed, and speed seemed always to be the primary consideration in tactical movements.

If the Italian Army is strong in mobility, however, it is weak in fire power and mechanical force, as compared with France, although a good deal of the leeway has been made up in recent months.

A great deal of the training done by the infantrymen is carried out to the accompaniment of music. This training is very practical, although it would seem strange to most British observers. Soldiers taking part in these exercises are divided into parties, one of which, armed with rifles and bayonets, attacks the other, composed of unarmed men. The unarmed men are compelled to close with their opponents and to wrest their weapons from them if possible. This training, it was claimed, would accustom the soldiers to facing cold steel and generally improve morale. I could well believe it.

At Modena I visited the Italian Sandhurst, and found that all entrants were compelled to show records of service at a military college, with a few minor exceptions. These cadets showed great *élan* and keenness on the parade ground.

Certainly the new Army of Italy is something very different from that of yesterday. It has need to be. A fact worthy of note is the 1936 declaration made by corps commanders that promotion will be based on merit and not on seniority. This certainly contributed to the enthusiasm of the young subalterns I met at Naples in the shadow of the giant *Rex*, which was bearing uneasy tourists back to America.

CHAPTER THREE

ITALY: BLACK AND WHITE PAGES

WHEN I INTERVIEWED MUSSOLINI'S DEPUTY HE ADVISED me not to leave Rome without seeing the city's "youngest daughter"—Littoria, the new town in the Pontine Marshes, and I promised to do so.

Long before 1931 efforts had been made by various Italian Governments to reclaim the Pontine Marshes, forty miles south of Rome, but all had ended in failure, and the vast expanse of flat, malaria-ridden marshland had become accepted as part of the natural order of things. The price of land in the area was negligible, but fever was so prevalent that the region was deserted, save for scattered peasant huts and miserable farm buildings. Six years ago the Fascist Cabinet, searching for new "achievements" with which to maintain internal and foreign prestige, selected the area for reclamation under the public works programme. It was decided to send engineers, architects, and labour experts to the area to investigate possible schemes and ascertain the probable cost of the work. To this end the help of the two Local Government authorities interested was enlisted—namely, the council controlling the Piscina region on the right of the River Sisto, and that whose area embraced the marshes proper on the left. The examining commission was appointed, and after a lengthy investigation reported that the cost would be considerably greater than the first estimates. The Ministry of Agriculture would have drawn back, but in the meantime Mussolini had made some sweeping

promises from platforms up and down the country, proclaiming that within a few months he would have succeeded where the Romans failed. It was too late to draw back, and a sub-committee of the Ministry was appointed to deal with the question of raising the vast sums required, which amounted to £160,000,000.

It was decided to mortgage the national budget up to 1961, the two main financing bodies being the National Life Insurance Institute and the National Institute of Social Insurance. The control of malaria and waste lands was embodied in the plan, and, most important of all from the point of view of the political leaders, the deproletarisation of the agricultural labourers of those northern provinces most affected by unemployment. In order to achieve this result the Commissariat of Inland Migrations was ordered to co-operate with the land reclamation councils, so that families could be transferred from the north as soon as possible.

An army of workers was recruited, and work was begun in the summer of 1931. Wages were low, varying between ten and twenty shillings a week, and the first squads were decimated by disease. But progress was rapid. The rains flowing down from the mountains, which had frequently flooded the area, were diverted to a huge " collector," which emptied itself into the sea near Foce Verde. An enormous canal was cut, beginning near Lake Ninfa, receiving the waters of the mountain torrents and joining the sea between the lakes of Fogliano and Monaci. This canal, called the " Mussolini," is over 200 miles in length, and is crossed by fifteen small bridges.

Many other smaller canals were constructed, one to provide a new mouth to the River Sisto.

In the lake zone, where canal drainage was impossible, the latest hydraulic machinery was installed to reclaim the plains, while high earth embankments were raised to prevent a recurrence of the periodic floods.

The reclamation of the marsh area proper proved a much more difficult task than was faced in the Piscinara

region, but in general the same principles were followed with success—namely, the diversion of the hill streams, the cutting of canals, the building of embankments in the low-lying areas, and the installation of pumping-houses.

The territory was transferred from the original owners to the ex-service men's association, and a special institute created to fight malaria. Families were drafted into the area, and tax exemptions and large harvests were only two of the boons promised them. Roads were laid out, and the land measured off into peasant-proprietor lots. The boundaries of a new town were marked, and it was named Littoria by Mussolini on December 18, 1932, with great pomp and ceremony, the sections being named after war battles. In his speech he congratulated the " farmers who have come from the lands of Venetia and the valley of the Po to till this soil." Soon, he added, Littoria would have 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants.

Shortly after I arrived in Rome the new town of Sabaudia, south-east of Littoria, was similarly founded with a flourish of trumpets—although apart from the soldiers and police there were few inhabitants to cheer the speeches.

The Fascist leaders, hearing that I was anxious to visit Littoria, placed a car at my disposal, and early one morning, accompanied by two Bersaglieri officers, we flashed through the Porta San Giovanni. Soon the suburbs of Rome were left behind, and we tore along the Appian Way past the long lines of red-yellow arches supporting the old Roman aqueducts. On either side the ruins of temples and tombs of the old empire studded the landscape. A few miles from the gate we entered the Ancient Way, lined with cypresses and pines. Before us the wooded Alban Hills rose from the undulating plain, the villas and little villages showing up bright and clear in the morning sunlight. An easy climb to Albano followed, then down through Genzano, where a few days before I had been staying in the midst of appalling poverty, to Lake Nemi. The road now led

on in wide sweeping curves through green woods to Velletri, where the marsh area begins. A criss-cross of canals and roads stretched before us. Little white-washed cottages and neat pump-houses were scattered over the country-side. At right-angles to the main road from Rome was the white way that led to Littoria, and within a few minutes I was in the centre of the town. "Town" is hardly a fair description, however, for although the streets have been laid out, few houses had been built, and apart from a cluster of public buildings Littoria can hardly be said to exist. There was a party building, a town hall, a cathedral, a post office, and a hotel, but few workers' homes. Cottages were scattered about the area, but it was clear that the propaganda describing a "flourishing new town" was so much window-dressing.

My companions were irritated at the replies given by some of the farmers to our questions when we called on them. The promises of big profits had not been realised, and they were hard put to it to win a bare living. Mortgage payments were everywhere in arrear, and they were only too eager to discuss their troubles. Only the officials seemed contented, and we were not sorry to escape some of the grumblers.

Sitting round the luncheon-table at Castel Gandolfo one of my attendants said: "Of course it takes time to build up these towns. And the work was necessary." True enough. But the promises had not been kept, and the beautifully printed Littoria booklets would be honester records if they included details of the expenditure per farm, the mortgages, the wheat yield, and the legion of unnecessary bureaucrats.

I learned some interesting facts about Italian propaganda methods from David Darragh, the Rome correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*, which I personally confirmed later. Darragh insisted on writing the truth —a gross breach of etiquette in Rome—and he was very outspoken in his criticism and reports. Journalists who wish to stay in Rome must either accept the daily

propaganda ration, write in ambiguities, or concentrate on non-political activities. Darragh would have none of this, and I was not surprised when he was expelled shortly afterwards.

Propaganda Minister Grazzi was criticising the *Daily Herald* to me one day and I asked him how it was that this paper's correspondent had not been expelled. "He is a very difficult man," said Grazzi, "and it would make such a noise. Besides, it is not necessary." Nevertheless, the *Herald* man—a Maltese—was also driven out some time after. This paper was, like most British dailies, apparently banned from the shops, but the Ministries received copies every day, and following a paragraph about my activities written by Hannen Swaffer, there was a sudden cooling in the official atmosphere. From Swaffer's article it was clear that I held some very un-Fascist views, and though Minister Grazzi said nothing on the subject, he suddenly advised me that the promised personal interview with Mussolini could not take place.

Odon Por referred bitterly to other foreigners who had, he said, come out with credentials suggesting they were Fascists and had returned to attack the regime. It was a case of *perfide Albion* again, and I commiserated with him on the facile hypocrisy of the Nordic peoples, although I assured him that most of the culprits were unconscious of, and would resent the criticism.

These happenings and my interest in workers' homes and factories brought me under the eye of the secret police. Altogether I was interrogated three times. On the first occasion I was accosted in the Piazza Venezia by two tall, well-dressed young men. One showed me his "Secret Police" membership card. Would I walk with them on the terrace of the Vittoriano? Certainly. A long questioning followed. My papers were demanded, and a detailed record of my movements that day and the previous day were required. What were my intentions? Had I come out as an observer? Visited any military air station? One of them described some

of my movements on the previous day with the air of a conjurer producing a magic rabbit. But eventually they were satisfied, and I was allowed to go.

After each interrogation my questioners were careful to assure me that their action was simply a " precautionary measure," and that they were under orders " from above." On my part, I assured them that I was not surprised at the surveillance, and fully appreciated the arduous and complicated nature of their work, so necessary to the regime.

One day I called on Signora Agnesi, secretary of the Italian Employers' Confederation, at the Palazzo Doria. Signora Agnesi is one of the ablest executives in Italy, possessing great insight and intelligence, and she is one of the few women occupying an important post. She talked of English politics, and, like one of the Ministers, thought that " Mosley is not the man to lead a national movement." (Mosley had recently been in Rome.) She laid down the conditions necessary for a " national leader "—he must not be an aristocrat or wealthy man ; he must be a demagogue ; must especially know how to speak to the masses in their own language.

She admitted that the entrance of women into most industries was attended by new difficulties. This was a very mild description of what was happening.

Officials had told me that Mussolini was worried over the latest birth-rate statistics, for it is clear that his drive for a 95 million population has had the opposite effect to that intended, and the banning of foreign birth-control experts had awakened a most inconvenient interest in such matters in the rural communes, where they had been previously unknown.

New taxes on bachelors were projected and bigger-family propaganda was being encouraged by new methods of social and economic pressure. Mussolini had just hailed a mother of twenty-two children as " the champion mother of all Italy," and described her as an example to all Italian women at home and abroad.

Prizes were instituted by the Government for the

mothers of the largest families in the country—holidays and cash gifts—and this example was followed by the provincial and municipal councils. Regional nominating contests were staged.

Bachelors were frowned upon in the Civil Service, and in some departments orders had been issued demanding that all officials who were not married by a certain date should resign their posts. As an official position is highly prized in Italy, this caused considerable embarrassment, for not every clerk was " walking out." The suddenness with which these orders appeared was arranged so that all clerks in Government employ would turn their thoughts in the required direction.

The existing tax on bachelors was very unpopular when at first imposed, but is now accepted as normal, and there are few complaints outside the collectors' offices.

Marriages were also encouraged by the daily publication of the particulars in a " box of honour " outside the communal bureaux ; the revival of old-fashioned festivities ; and great reductions in railway fares for honeymooners.

Editors were encouraged to give space to articles describing the joys of married life and attacking young men who remained single as " moral cowards " and " enemies of the Fascist spirit." As all editors must be members of the Party and the " encouragement " came from the Palazzo Littorio headquarters, there was no difficulty in securing compliance.

" Preparedness " propaganda was also used. At the previous annual Party conference Mussolini said : " The future and safety of the nation are linked to the population question. Number forms the irreplaceable condition for superiority." Number, again, enables him to argue about the " necessity for colonial expansion."

By the law of April, 1933, the National Maternity and Child Welfare Institute was reorganised, and ninety-two provincial federations set up to work with committees of patrons—at least one patron to each village. Unfortunately for Mussolini, many of the patrons were of the

idle busybody type, and their attempts to advise wives and mothers produced alarming reactions. A further reorganisation was being considered, and meanwhile the birth-rate figures show signs of a return to the downward slope of 1925.

When the mother of twenty-two was applauded by the officials as she walked on the platform to receive the national prize from Mussolini there was ironical cheering from some women present, which was sternly suppressed. The ridicule was fairly typical. The Italian woman has no vote, and to all intents and purposes is debarred from the professions and public affairs.

Little wonder that she refuses to accept the new drudgery supported by Fascism—which in practice means the political leaders, as Professor Herman Finer, who gave me advice before going to Italy, concludes in his brilliant and scholarly volume.

Awards have been offered for ideas which will promote an increased birth-rate, and one of the first of these to be adopted was the depopularisation of slimness. Magazine and art editors were ordered to boycott as far as possible the display of photographs of slim women and girls in bathing costumes or attenuated dresses.

Textile industrialists in Lombardy gave loyal co-operation and funds to the drive against short skirts and wasp waists, and a campaign against Paris control of fashions was begun.

Film producers and exhibitors took part in this work, although their task was more difficult.

The girls in the large *Piccole Italiana* Party organisation were given lectures after the weekly parades commending them to wear long skirts and ridiculing the " clothes-peg " fashions of Western Europe and America.

Employers who wished to demonstrate their enthusiasm for the regime affixed cards to their works notice-boards stating that men with large families would be given preference for promotion.

In some communes landlords were asked to give

preference to large families whenever possible, but this was asking too much.

When I was staying among the workers in the little village of Calatabiano, a young peasant read out an appeal for bigger families from the newspaper as we sat round the supper-table one night.

" If Mussolini were here he would not say that," said one young woman. Her attitude was widespread. The women may read and listen to the propaganda, but as for heeding " a few noisy men who have never cooked a meal "—No !

If women are banned from the professions they are taking a leading part in social service work, and many women of the nobility are working hard in this sphere. When I went to Florence to see the Countess Bellegarde, who is occupied with the anti-tuberculosis campaign, I met Signorina Bianca-Maria, a secretary attached to Marconi's staff, and heard from her that many young Italian women who have received good educations are taking up secretarial work—a new development. Several of these women have made themselves indispensable, and are virtually in control of businesses, although prejudice militates against them being made nominal managing directors.

The Italian propaganda about the anti-tuberculosis campaign proved justified in every detail. Here there was no exaggeration of any kind, although it must be admitted that other branches of public health work were well below the standards reached in Britain.

Recently the British Minister of Health has again drawn attention to the fact that 10 per cent of the deaths from tuberculosis in the County of London represented cases that had not been notified.

Such a state of affairs would be impossible in Italy, where a nation-wide propaganda campaign is being waged against the white scourge. So successful has the intensive Italian campaign proved that when I visited a number of sanatoria and dispensaries in various provinces, at the invitation of Mr. Oxenham B. Shute,

who has taken a prominent part in preventive work in this country, I found that doctors had been attracted to Italy from all parts of the world. High up in the northern Alps, at Prasomaso, I lunched with specialists from Hungary and Poland, who told me of their experiments, and of other visitors from far-off Uruguay and Canada.

In ten years the tuberculosis mortality curve in Italy has fallen from 60,000 deaths per annum to less than 35,000—a reduction of 41·66 per cent. The main reason for this astonishing result is the new compulsory assurance scheme, which was started in a small way in 1927, and was modelled on our own National Health Acts. The Italian social insurance system is not, of course, as comprehensive as our own, and even the special anti-tuberculosis scheme does not yet include all classes of workers. But a splendid beginning has been made, and the results speak for themselves.

In Rome I visited the new Carlo Forlanini Institute, which is the last word in scientific modernity. Erected on the western side of Monte Verde, on the outskirts of the capital, and facing the blue Tyrrhenian Sea across the rolling Campagna, the new white buildings cover an area of 230,000 square yards. High, imposing ranges of terraced pavilions, laboratories, clinics, and wards, tower over beautiful and spacious gardens. The institute contains 1,550 beds, and has a staff of 45 specialists, 90 trained nurses, and 150 assistants. The Carlo Forlanini centre controls the activities of dozens of smaller institutions that are being created all over the country. I visited many of these, and was particularly impressed by those at Syracuse, in Sicily, Bussana, Liguria, Modena, Florence, Bologna, and Milan.

The second main reason for the success of the campaign is that the State has intervened to ensure perfect co-ordination between the various organisations engaged in combative work. The action has greatly multiplied the strength of the movement. Nine bodies are affected —the National Maternity and Infant Welfare Foundation, the Military Health Department, the Provincial

Anti-Tuberculosis Councils (composed of public-spirited individuals, specialists, etc., in each town), the Mountain and Sea Colonies' Scheme of the Fascist Party, the National Federation for the Fight Against Tuberculosis, the *Balilla* (Youth Sections of the Fascist Party), the Institute for Social Providence (administering social insurance), the War Orphans' Foundation, and the Italian Red Cross Committees. These organisations work under the general direction of the Ministry of the Interior, while retaining their mainly voluntary structure. The Minister could not, of course, deal personally with a nation-wide scheme, and he appoints a Commissioner, in whose hands rest all major decisions. In five years Italy has spent over £25,000,000 through these bodies, and no one who has seen their work will deny that the money has been spent to the maximum of advantage.

State control has led to the modernisation of town dispensaries, which are now provided with X-ray apparatus and pneumo-thorax equipment. Pneumo-thorax injections and refills are only in rare cases obtainable at dispensaries in western countries, but in Italy the operation is so common that it is treated with a sang-froid that is at first disconcerting.

Each dispensary in Italy has a throat specialist, for the Italian tuberculosis experts attach great importance to early examination of the throats of suspects. One of the most admirable features of the campaign is the enthusiasm that is being displayed by the doctors, who are ably seconding the initiative of the State and the welfare organisations with voluntary work and speeches, etc.

One of the latest developments is the opening of "sanatorium villages," which are entirely devoted to the after-care of the less dangerous cases, and the segregation of slum-dwellers who might spread infection if discharged only partly cured. These villages are usually situated in the mountains or by the sea, and have proved so successful that they are likely to be considerably reinforced in the next few years.

There are now twenty large hospitals in Italy entirely devoted to tuberculosis cases. These account for 5,700 beds; forty-four other hospitals account for 25,000 beds. With other accommodation the total of available beds now exceeds 50,000.

The third reason for the splendid new results is the intensive propaganda campaign that has been carried on in the last five years. Stress is laid on the instruction of the masses through posters and Press articles. Many cinemas have shown short films showing the dangers of infection, etc., and radio talks by experts are another feature. Every year a special anti-T.B. campaign is held in the spring, during which children are enlisted by the thousand to sell stamps—costing about a half-penny—at every main street corner in Italy. These stamps are the last word in propaganda skill, having arresting three-colour designs and slogans, and are a great contrast to the insipid efforts seen in other countries. Money is also raised through the sale of propagandist literature. The stamps or seals are affixed to letters, and help to advertise the campaign, while the hoardings are so effectively plastered that it is difficult for anyone to escape knowledge of the progress made.

In addition, six thousand speakers, who give their services free, are addressing meetings all over the country during the campaign. Ninety-two " special " speakers, drawn from leaders of industry, politics, the arts, and the professions address conferences in the big towns. Recently over four million letters were despatched to all municipal authorities, labour organisations, school-teachers, members of learned societies, etc., by the League for the Fight against Tuberculosis, and a greater number is promised for next year's drive. Valuable work is being done in the schools, and even in remote villages in Calabria the work of saturating the nation in combative knowledge goes on.

It was pleasant and instructive to see this work of social progress going forward in the midst of all the alarums and rumours, and to reflect that the conquest

of the white scourge had been brought a step nearer by the Italian experiments.

Several English doctors of repute were keenly interested in the possibilities of organising a national anti-tuberculosis campaign in this country on the lines of that now operating successfully in Italy. These doctors were assisted by several laymen who have studied combative methods abroad, headed by Mr. Oxenham B. Shute—himself stricken in health—a retired bank official of remarkable linguistic attainments, for whose disinterestedness, sincerity, and public-spirited energy I acquired a profound admiration. But the war and the strained feelings between the two countries negated these efforts. Yet there is no anti-British feeling of any kind among the Italian workers, in spite of the platform denunciations.

I admired Shute because of certain qualities which I respected but could not hope to acquire—for humility, patience, willingness to bear rebuffs and to work against odds without harshness or bitterness. Most of all because he was gripped by an idea, as have been all the men I admire most—Cromwell, Rhodes, Lincoln, Lawrence, Burton—all our Empire-builders, the founders of the great religions, and the Plutarchian heroes. It is this *idée fixe*, which enables men to transcend the normal bounds of human possibility, that is saluted by Ludwig in his greatest biographies and by the music masters, Beethoven and Wagner, in their immortal classics. But against the few who are acclaimed by posterity there are the unknown thousands whose bodies cluster in a forgotten pyramid, Tamerlanesque but yet aspiring.

CHAPTER FOUR

ITALY AFTER WAR

IN ROME I MET THE DUKE DI CESARO, MEMBER OF THE famous house of Colonna, who was in Mussolini's first Coalition Cabinet, and he invited me to stay on his Sicilian estates. He warned me that the standard of life was lower in the south but the reality was startling. The Duke, a man of very wide culture and distinguished appearance, was the first " born aristocrat " I had met who did not remind me of Lloyd George's famous Plymouth dictum—" most aristocrats are mongrels, anyway ! " Di Cesaro had retained his democratic faith in spite of all difficulties, and it was, I felt, such men as he who should be ruling the Italy of Garibaldi and Cavour. He had no plans for re-entering politics, and was occupying himself with literary work.

Visiting most of the new vaunted public works schemes I discovered that most of them were mere skilful bluffs. Professor Salvemini's economic analysis of these schemes was unanswerable. My already low opinion of much-travelled " intellectuals," " foreign affairs experts," and " publicists " (whatever that may mean) fell to zero after comparing their facile conclusions with the realities.

One drowsy afternoon in Rome I toiled up the ancient staircase that led to the Palace of the Cæsars. The young University professor behind me halted and surveyed the scene below—deserted, for it was the siesta hour, and the brazen sun burned in a cloudless sky.

I expressed my admiration at the grandeur of conception of the emperors and their architects. He said : " Yes, and we shall bring that spirit back."

"With Abyssinia as a beginning?"

"Why not?"

In Venice I was with *Balilla* officers aboard a Fascist speed-boat on the Grand Canal, at a review of craft attached to the Party organisations. As we tore past S. George's Island towards the Lido, where crowds of tourists lay sun-bathing, the young Blackshirts told me of their hopes and ambitions. Like the rest of Italy's youth, they were saturated with militarist ideas, for throughout every department of educational activity the cult of war is encouraged, and even the text-books for the elementary schools history course declare that the *Fascisti* will restore the glories of Trajan's empire, while all teachers who want promotion must join the Party teachers' association and drill the youth units after working hours.

The world knows how the war progressed, and how Abyssinia was converted into an Italian province through the butchery of the practically defenceless savages, the systematic annihilation of the civil population, the tearing up of treaties, the flouting of the League of Nations and the insolent threats to Britain—these latter bluffs so successful that they encouraged their inventor to new and more ambitious essays.

But what of the men who were doing the job? Were they opposed to the war? No, save in a small minority of cases. The skilful atrocity propaganda and the lavish promises of big pay, land grants, and jobs had converted the masses to the adventure. While to the young women anything that promised to take their lovers from the demoralising atmosphere of moral idleness, in which they never had a lira to call their own, was welcome. The talk in western Europe about a widespread underground anti-war movement was so much rubbish.

If wages in the north were below the British level, those paid in Calabria and Sicily did not stand comparison. I lived among the peasants in Sicily, and took the opportunity of seeing how they eked out their tiny

incomes. In some villages no hot meals are cooked during more than half the year, and the people survive on a diet that would drive the average British worker into rebellion in a few days. Some families could not even afford the cheap communal wine, and relied upon orchard raids for fruit supplies.

The fishermen among whom I was working at Naxos told me that I must visit Etna before I left Sicily. Otherwise " La Montagna," as they called the volcano, might bring evil fortune upon me for my neglect. After supper one night in a fisherman's whitewashed cottage, the remains of the sardines *a beccaficu* were taken away and we squatted in front of the door to gaze at the sea. Away to the south we could see the dark slopes of the volcano, and I was regaled with fanciful descriptions of the animals which still lurked in the upper wooded zone.

Naxos itself was interesting, for it was here that the Greeks landed in 735 B.C. to found their first colony. But few Greek traces remain, and there is little local interest in these—perhaps because of the rareness of visitors.

Leaving Naxos early in the morning I soon arrived at Alcantara, a little village whose name recalled the Saracen occupation, for it obviously derives from the Arabic word for a bridge—" El Kantara "—which crossed the river here.

The vast circular cone of Etna was now on my right hand, and the scene was one of striking beauty. Passing a cottage garden in which a very old, brown-faced woman, wearing large brass ear-rings, was digging, I entered a new dusty white road flanked by orchards, orange, lemon and citron groves and vineyards.

A few peasant women passed me in their picturesque red and white dresses, handkerchiefs knotted round their hair, some barefooted, all looking strong and healthy. Then a rickety trap, drawn by one of the thinnest ponies I have ever seen, went jolting past on the hard, uneven surface, the driver shouting a greeting. As the morning went on the heat grew intense. An occasional car shot past, throwing up clouds of choking

white dust and showers of loose stones. There was little shade, and the sky was a strange brazen blue. Little bridges crossed the newer lava streams.

A few miles farther south I turned inland down a side-road and came to Calatabiano, where the Carthaginians were once diverted from their advance on Syracuse by an eruption. Picking my way along a narrow, broken road, I joined a small company of peasants making their way back to the town from the vineyard where they were employed. They were all very poorly dressed, some of the women being almost in rags, although all had boots or sandals.

The town is small and very compact, being a network of streets centring on a big piazza. Our road led direct to the piazza, and I found myself in the middle of a crowd of jostling, excited people for, as luck would have it, it was the big market day of the year. The town itself consisted of mean little houses of grey stone, and the only building of any importance was the cathedral, which was crowded.

It was the feast of S. Philip, and a party of young men had just brought the body of the Saint into the town from its mountain sanctuary. Many people were talking of the speed and skill with which the holy relic had been manœuvred, for the young men, seizing the heavy wooden trestles on which the relic is mounted, run down the hill-side into the town at top speed, and since the Saint is the patron of the district, a rapid transit is thought to ensure good crops for the ensuing year. This time the journey had taken only seven minutes, which was a record, and the people were naturally jubilant. The firework display that night, I learned, would be particularly good.

The stalls which lined the sides of the piazza were covered with an assortment of gewgaws and confectionery that was reminiscent of an Eastern bazaar. Little boys ate strange, sticky, curiously-twisted sweets that cost only a *soldi*. Then there was the peculiar transparent ice-cream of the district, and little round cakes on

long spits. Two stalls were displaying huge heaps of knives, stilettos, daggers and swords, and the salesman kept the boys off with long sticks.

The red-brown faces of the men and women behind the stalls were topped by hats of the strangest shapes, ranging from the red fez of the *Avanguardisti* to round straw caps and huge black sombreros, and their clothes were equally picturesque. Frequent quarrels arose, for the Sicilian loves an argument, and even when the brass band of the local militia played " Giovinezza " angry voices rose in dispute behind the scandalised conductor, who descended, to become the centre of a new commotion.

There were no hotels or inns in the little town, and I stayed in a peasant's cottage. When he learned that I was English he was very much afraid that he might be breaking the law, and begged me to accompany him to the town marshal's house, which official—a smart, astonishingly well-dressed young man—on seeing my passport, immediately reassured my host and welcomed me to the district. But I got little rest that night, for the firework display, which began at midnight, was the noisiest I have ever heard, and continued until 3 a.m., by which time the whole of the country-side for many miles around must have been disturbed. When I finally went to bed, after three o'clock, tremendous explosions were still going on, shaking the whole town, for the fireworks were of a size I had never seen in Britain.

Next morning I set out for Nicolosi, where guides, mules and provisions can be secured for the ascent. It begins with the Red Mountain, Monti Rossi, which is over 3,000 feet high, and itself boasts craters like those of Etna.

The muleteer who accompanied me had eloquent stories of his relegation from the ranks of the middle class into those of the proletariat, and, as he clearly enjoyed talking about himself, I encouraged him. By the time we reached the north-west base of the Red Mountain I knew the names of all the girls who had, he said, offered him their hands ! The ascent was easily made in less than an hour.

Looking back to Nicolosi I saw the lava bed deposited by the last big upheaval, while above my head were dozens of little Red Mountains, dominated by Montagnola, which hid the big crater. As I had half expected, Etna from the foothills looked very different from the majestic peak that had seemed so remote and proud at Taormina. Passing between Monte Concilio and Monte Sona, we crossed two very large lava streams. Riding on steadily we came to the *Casa Cantoniera*, where the mules were fed and watered. We were now about four hours from Nicolosi, and about 6,000 feet up, as far as I could judge. Below us was a very thickly-populated belt of villages in the midst of luxuriant vegetation. Millions of tons of lava, outpoured over the area, have made the ground very fertile, and plantations of vines, apples and nuts were frequent, while the land surrounding Nicolosi abounded with orange and lemon groves.

It was interesting to note the changes in the scenery at the different altitudes. Chestnuts on the lower slopes were followed by beeches and oaks, then pines and birches. Wolves, foxes, and weasels are said to lurk in these woods, and the local farmers should know. But animal life is becoming scarcer with the upward march of the cultivated belt, and I saw no traces of the deer and wild boar which are still rumoured to be in the upper reaches.

Etna is over 10,700 feet high, and is the highest volcano in Europe. In the distance the cone had appeared regular, but I saw that it actually rose from another beheaded cone, the trunk of which formed the greater part of the enormous mountain-mass, which is twenty-five miles round at the base.

On the outer cone were scores of groups of little craters, while the lava which had poured from these was twisted into a thousand peculiar shapes. On the east side of the mountain was a vast cleft, with perfectly sheer sides, thousands of feet in depth and three miles wide, the *Valle del Bove*, from which an immense stream of lava poured in a sudden eruption many years ago.

We had now about 4,000 feet to climb. It was cold, and going was steep and difficult. Vegetation practically disappeared about 3,000 feet from the summit, after which there was only black rock and snow, and a few juniper bushes. Then we reached the *Casa Etnea*, which is used as a hostel by climbers, wishing to see the sunrise. The *Casa Etnea* includes a little building erected by the British troops who occupied Sicily during the Napoleonic wars. I was interested to discover that Gladstone visited this place in his youth.

A few hundred yards from the *Casa Etnea* was a cleft called the *Fumarola*, at the very base of the uppermost cone and emitting gas continually. Away to the east was the Philosopher's Tower, where Empedocles, the famous philosopher of Agrigentum (Girgenti, on the south coast), is said to have lived for many years in pursuit of his studies of nature. Matthew Arnold's forgotten poem " Empedocles on Etna " tried in vain to re-embody his vague personality.

The route we had to follow brought us to the *Valle del Bove*, up the west side of which the final ascent, taking over an hour for its thousand feet or so, is made. On the way we passed various clefts from which hot vapour was pouring, and the smell of the various sulphates was very strong. The wind was brisking up, too, and added to the discomforts of the intense cold at the summit. The crater itself was a huge multi-coloured void, in which firelit clouds of steam and gas and smoke rolled and curled in all directions, finally streaming in a long trail in the direction of the prevailing wind. About the pit there seemed an atmosphere of wicked pulsating strength, as if it was conscious of many unplayed tricks in reserve.

Turning around, I found that I could see for a tremendous distance, for Etna dominates the whole island, and at certain times even Malta—150 miles off—is visible. The spectacle was one of inspiring grandeur, and this was heightened by one's feeling of absolute solitude amid a desolate waste of barren rock.

Along the rim of the crater were several fissures, and I descended the inner face for some distance with the help of these. But the poisonous fumes and the hot vapours soon grew too intense and I returned to the summit.

The crater has varying effects on people seeing it for the first time, so I was told by my guide, who was a connoisseur of reactions. Some are horrified, many made uneasy, a few disappointed, hardly any unconcerned. Some young Germans had thoroughly enjoyed it.

I found Sicily surprisingly little patronised by tourists ; indeed, in many parts of the interior foreigners are practically unknown. Even in ancient Syracuse, one of the greatest cities of the ancient world, where there are extensive Greek remains, visitors are few, and it is very rarely that anyone stays in the new town. To ninety-nine out of every hundred travellers Sicily means only Mount Etna, Palermo and Taormina.

Yet there can be no doubt that the island is not unworthy of the description of " earthly paradise " applied to it by an English traveller of Victorian days. Sicily is almost purely agricultural, the magnificence of the cliffs and mountains being rivalled by the beauties of the orchards which abound on every side. Citron, lemon and orange groves are flanked by vineyards, and everywhere there are magnificent flower gardens. In Taormina I met some Englishmen who had first visited the island thirty years ago and found it so beautiful that they decided to make their home there ! After the noise, rain and petrol fumes of home, my sympathies were with them, although I can say frankly that I could never bring myself to a similar choice. Taormina has only 3,000 inhabitants, but its unrivalled situation has made it a frequented winter resort. The town stands on a spur of Monte Tauro, and is overlooked by a ruined Norman castle. I laboriously climbed the 1,300 feet high hill on which this is perched to find traces of the Viking conquerors.

In Taormina I visited the *Casa del Fascio*, the only recreation club in the town, and heard my first whisper

of the Mafia. People of the upper class, I discovered, did not care to talk very much about the society, no doubt fearing reprisals, but the workers were often outspoken.

The peculiarly Sicilian atmosphere of secretive individualism is suitable to the growth of such strange weeds, and it was not hard to realise the difficulties facing the central government in Palermo. At first the Mafia was a terroristic society of patriots. Rich landlords, who supported a tyrannical government and oppressed tenants, were attacked; their property was destroyed, and they were subjected to a thousand little insults and injuries. Sometimes wealthy men were brought to the verge of ruin by the society's agents, and a system of organised blackmail was developed.

After the entry of the patriotic party into Rome in 1870, however, a new government machine was set up, and Sicily became a province of United Italy. The need for the Mafia had gone, according to the new officials. But the Mafia thought otherwise, and there were no disbandments. Gradually, however, the more patriotic individuals were expelled or resigned from the society, and it developed into a robber band.

The openness of its activities and the growing self-confidence and wealth of leaders who, like Spada in Corsica, boasted swaggeringly of their exploits, drew upon the society the disapproval of all respectable Sicilians. But nothing could be done. After the war, when young ex-soldiers swelled the ranks of the adventurers, and all members took an oath of secrecy, traitors were hunted down and killed as in the Middle Ages. For three years after the armistice the Mafia ruled supreme in many areas. But after the rise to power of Fascism the Rome Government decided to break the hold of the bands. Large rewards produced the informers, and it was not long before hundreds of arrests and deportations to the Lipari Islands were made. But in spite of the claims of Mussolini, the roots were not burned, and Mafia branches exist to this day.

Yet even in the sulphur mines, where many of the

workers are very hard-bitten men, always quarrelling, and prone to occasional violence, there is never any serious outbreak of Mafia crime. Among the fishermen at Naxos I heard frequent mention—usually very uncomplimentary—of the Mafia. When I asked for details, stories were told of mild blackmail intrigue. "I should not pay any attention to these *Mafiosi* (blackguards)," said one man, "they no longer count for anything." But in the same town another fisherman with whom I was speaking told me that in the villages surrounding Catania the Mafia candidates were always appointed to the local advisory councils which assisted the *podestas* (mayors). It can, however, be said that the society is no longer obvious, and there is no likelihood of its organising a terrorist system or of being itself thoroughly reorganised unless there is a collapse of the central government.

Sicily abounds in surprises, and not the least of these is Piani dei Greci, an old Albanian settlement near Palermo, where the workers still wear the baggy trousers, spiked shoes and fez of their ancestors on feast days and holidays.

Crossing the Straits of Messina to Reggio, I thought with regret of the invitations I had been compelled to refuse. For the Sicilian preserves the old spirit of insular hospitality, just as he preserves a hatred of vulgarity and undignified innovation.

As soon as the war was over, the victors were munificently rewarded. Count Ciano, leader of a bombing squadron, became Foreign Secretary. Achille Starace received various military and civil honours. Graziani became Marshal and Viceroy and Badoglio was made a duke, whilst hosts of minor promotions were made. The prestige of Marshal Badoglio slumped slightly however, when it became known that Mussolini had "awarded" him the *tessera* (membership ticket of the Fascist Party)—for which the Marshal had never applied! For Badoglio's attitude towards the Fascist regime is well known. He has never been a "political

general" like De Bono or Baistracchi, and only his manifest ability enabled him to survive some pointed remarks about the Fascisti in 1922. Again, he is a friend of the Crown Prince, whose dislike of Mussolini is notorious, and has even been signified at public functions.

Among the workers the much-advertised 40-hour working week experiments in Milan factories are no longer even discussed. Many of the concessions made in the last ten years have been withdrawn. Workers in the big Lombardy undertakings not on short time are employed for 48 and more hours per week, at an hourly rate of 6d. to 7d.—a penny lower than the October, 1935, figure.

Work on bridges and public works had been held up through the absence of ferrocrete and iron, and there was widespread unemployment in the motor industry. The Alfa-Romeo and Fiat factories are still producing armaments, and as the demand for cars has shrunk the problem of changing over to peacetime work is serious. The Government has extended the existing contracts, for among these workers there is more danger of anti-Fascist organisation than anywhere else in Italy.

Living among the workers in Rome, I heard a good deal of grumbling about the latest wage cuts. A builder's labourer with whom I was staying earned only 2s. 6d. a day. Many munition workers draw less than 25s. a week, and their standard of living has deteriorated following the rise in prices.

Hotel workers are earning only 10s. to 12s. a week in many resorts, out of which they pay 3s. to 4s. for a room in a tenement house. Rents have been raised almost everywhere, for the landlords are trying to pass on the new taxes, which include a 10 per cent levy on all non-government dividends and company capital. Railway and omnibus charges have also risen.

In Turin, a factory foreman told me that some of the men under him—he earned only 17s. for a 50-hour week—could only survive by not paying their rent, and there were dozens of evictions every week. The chief cause is not so much the wage reductions as the rise in

the prices of necessaries. Flour, meat, lard, macaroni, cheese, coffee, butter, margarine—all have risen in price by as much as 25 to 50 per cent. Only native vegetables and fruit are cheap—due to the loss of the export market. Here are sample prices from the working-class districts of Milan and Naples :

Margarine, 9d. per pound. Sugar, 3d. per pound. Meat (cheapest cuts), 1s. 2d. per pound. Jam, 1s. 5d. per pound. Eggs, 2d. each. Sweetened tinned milk, 6d. per small tin.

Men cannot keep themselves fit for heavy work on the diet to which many are condemned, and the employers are commenting on the abnormal number of workers absent through illness.

In the horrible slums of the Piazza Mercato quarter of Naples, where rents are low, I found families living on fruit, vegetables, water and bread—and not too much of the last-named.

The prevailing mood among the women is one of apathy. Special " buyers' meetings " have been held in various districts to " explain " the price increases, and several women added to the propaganda secretariat, so that the correct " approaches " could be made.

But I met no women willing to go to Ethiopia as colonists, in spite of the map billboards addressed to them, with sections inscribed " coffee," " oil," " wheat," " cattle," " cotton," " gold " and " silver " !

In the south there are hopes that the promises of free land and family-settlement in Abyssinia will be carried out. But the few returned soldiers I met threw cold water on the schemes. There was a most definite unanimity of belief that Abyssinia is " not a white man's country." I heard, rather to my surprise, that the large increase in army colonial service pay was not just another promise of the Propaganda Ministry, but has been effected.

Prices are generally high, but there is no serious shortage of necessaries, and nothing of the rationing atmosphere of 1918. The English colonies in such

places as Florence and Taormina have not been interfered with, and there is a general belief that the shattered tourist trade will revive. Signor Ravizza, whose Grand Hotel des Anglais at San Remo became the Hotel Ravizza after Sanctions Day, said that his English guests would no doubt return within a few months.

He is typical of the hoteliers, and they can point to the new "tourist lira" scheme as being certain to benefit them. At the moment foreign visitors are mostly Germans. Few people outside Italy know how important this tourist traffic is to the country, but the statistics of money spent by foreigners in normal years, published by the municipalities, are illuminating.

The comparative apathy with which the founding of the Fascist empire has been received shows how timely was the collapse of the Abyssinian forces. And not the least achievement of the army of East Africa was the production of a perfectly gilt-edged excuse for marking time in social and economic affairs at home!

Among the leaders, however, little is heard but talk of fresh victories. I recalled the words of the staff officer who had said to me, before the war: "If we cannot give them bread we can give them glory." Here was a whole philosophy, and one that worked, moreover. Italian prestige and national ambition reached high water mark when first the League and then the might of Britain was challenged and ridiculed. The platitudinarian treaty-lawyers and idealogues had indeed proved poor material to put into the field against the cynical realists of the new Europe. Democracy, collective security, solemn treaties and the honour of men and nations—all were betrayed, and British prestige sank throughout the world as the lesser powers witnessed our humiliation. This humiliation is less patent in Britain than elsewhere, for it has been masked by apologists, but every citizen of the overseas Empire and every Britisher abroad knows its extent, just as every official in our Chinese services knows what a catastrophe our attitude towards the Japanese invasion of Manchuria proved to be.

In embassies and ministries and salons of fifty countries Britishers were to hear these echoes while they sat burning with impotent rage against the weaklings, turncoat mountebanks and senile procrastinators responsible. These were, indeed, worthy of their generation! My God!—a nation and an empire survives only by its will to power and its fulfilment of its mission—in our case to give peace to the world—peace with honour. Over the time-serving and unctuous records of the men who have held power without being worthy of it will fall the shadow of Manchuria, Abyssinia, and a hundred other crimes. True, they have excuses—such men are adepts at alibis—unpreparedness, uncertainty, "secret reports," pacifist opinion, and so on. These will be examined in another chapter.

Returning from Italy I found Sir Oswald Mosley giving loud praise to Italian Fascist institutions. I challenged him to a public debate on conditions in Italy. He refused the challenge, and when I offered to meet him in his own headquarters, with only his own men present and the Press and outsiders excluded, he again wrote refusing.

I was offered the use of 10,000 photographs in the Italian State Tourist Bureau in London for articles. Signorina Casagrande, in charge, made only one stipulation—would I bring my articles to them before publication, so that the appropriate pictures could be selected!

In another case, sums up to £70 were offered for articles praising the new Italy.

Large quantities of propaganda material—two trunkfuls—had been forwarded to me from Fascist leaders in case I had forgotten anything!

Suddenly, however, everything changed. I was informed by the Italian Embassy that my last book was banned in Italy by order of the Foreign Minister (then Mussolini), and the woman radio announcer in Rome, Lisa Sergio, had something unflattering to say about my activities.

CHAPTER FIVE

RUSSIA AND GERMANY AGAIN

SHORTLY AFTER MY RETURN FROM ITALY I WAS informed that a book describing my experiences in Germany and Russia in 1934 was banned in Germany and Poland, and I was advised to revise my projected route to the Ukraine. I had planned to go to the Ukraine in order to discover the truth about the famine reports which were still circulating. I applied for a visa in the ordinary way to the official Russian travel agency, but was referred to the Russian Embassy in London, which had apparently intervened.

M. Vinogradoff, the Press Attaché, received me at the Embassy in Kensington Palace Gardens, and I soon found that the real nature of my summons there was the book about Russia. Leading me to a chair on the garden terrace, Vinogradoff produced a copy of the book. It was liberally marked with pencil at passages to which the Embassy staff had taken exception. Vinogradoff dealt first of all with the military information, and I heard the comments of General Putna, the Military Attaché (later shot in Moscow in a Trotsky "clean up"). I had "gone to places where visitors should not go, including armament factories and military barracks." I did not deny this, but there were arguments about other matters. I was asked not to publish certain statements, but refused. I was then informed that the book was banned from Russia, and that I would not be permitted to send any copies to any English and American friends working there. As to the

Ukraine visa, an answer was due from Moscow within a few days, but I should not expect a favourable reply.

A few days later I was informed that I could not return by any route or under any circumstances.

But the frontiers of the vast republic are too long to be closely guarded everywhere, and I entered the Ukraine from Soroki, north of Kishinev, in Bessarabia. It is easy to get across the Bessarabia frontier, which is the river Dniester, although not so easy as in the Far Eastern republics. Bessarabia was a Russian province up to 1918, and the Roumanian annexation is still unrecognised by the Soviets. The military occupation of the province which has continued since the war indicates the determination of the Roumanians to denationalise the peasants, but there are great difficulties, for thousands of Bessarabians have relatives across the river. No Russians had been allowed to cross the frontier since the war, and the precautions against Communist propaganda are very elaborate. Hundreds of people living in Kishinev, including a large number of Jews, have relatives with addresses a few miles away whom they have not seen since the war. Inevitably, a clandestine trans-river service has sprung up, and no doubt this would survive even if the Soviet regime collapsed, as anyone familiar with the Roumanian character would admit.

The river passage was made in remarkably fast time, and after paying my boatman I clambered uncertainly up a muddy slope. We had already arranged a code of signals. The night was pitch-black and I could not even see the lamps of the Red frontier patrols. Dressed in a ragged grey tweed suit, cloth cap and broken boots, so that I would bear some surface resemblance at least to a good Russian citizen, my luggage consisted of a compass, torch, a sailor's knife, handkerchief, notebook, map, and a " Russian made easy " booklet. I had no intention of making a long stay !

I had expected trouble in reaching a town, and was prepared for anything but the fairly easy time that ensued. The danger of interrogation by some intelligent

official was the chief worry, and I avoided this sometimes by narrow margins. In the parts of Russia I had visited I knew that prominent officials of the Home Department (as the G.P.U. is now called) wore peasant and workmen's clothes, and even the chief of police in Leningrad —a most efficient man—had a *penchant* for sitting in rags by the galley stoves of visiting ships !

Fortunately, the officials in the Ukraine were easy to recognise by their shaven faces and tidy, if occasionally dirty, clothes. All those I saw wore the familiar five-pointed red star in their caps, and I took no chances with less recognisable doubtfuls.

I had the address of an American engineer in Kharkov, and other addresses in Kiev, so that after a night in the open the worst part of the journey was over.

After visiting Jampol, I struck off north to Vinnitsa and Lipovets, a small town south of Kiev. There was little timbered land in the area, and the clayey black steppe had been almost everywhere parcelled out among collectives. The men on these rich plains are a tall, long-legged, broad-faced, sluggish type, and they are still strongly nationalist, with visions of a separate Ukraine state, and no amount of pressure from Moscow has been able to eradicate this nationalism.

Russia, after eighteen months, seemed a little cleaner, a little better organised, and I saw several indications of a popularisation of Western economic ideas.

On a collective farm at Lipovets a young *Komsomol* (Communist Youth Leaguer) told me about her worries. She had to teach tractor mechanism to the older peasants, and this was a particularly nerve-racking job. She had a brother across the Dniester, but the narrow strip of water might as well have been an ocean, she pointed out, for no Russians were allowed across. I made no comments at this, and we talked about *Osoviakhim* (National Association for the Promotion of National Defence, Aviation and Gas Warfare), of which she was a member. She had to do two nights' training a week. What about the German invasion? "They say it is

bound to come. The capitalist powers must expand or burst." She had all the Marxist jargon. Did her friends want to fight the German workers? Of course not—only the capitalists and imperialists."

"But if there is a war you will be against the German workers."

"Yes, that is the madness of it, because we have no quarrel with them. Russia wants peace, but if we are invaded we shall have to fight."

She took me for a foreign technician, of whom there are a good many in the south, and I found this a suitable rôle.

Unequal wages were the rule in Ukrainia as in the north, and the Communist Party limit of 600 roubles per month for members had apparently been indefinitely suspended. Housing conditions are still very bad, and there is a great lack of necessary manufactured goods.

There was no difficulty in confirming the famine stories, for most people had lost relatives or friends; and while I could obtain no figures of any kind, the death-roll must have been tremendous. Forcible collectivisation had been followed by peasant reprisals. Livestock marked down for the State had been killed everywhere and only enough land had been sown to provide for local needs. A bad harvest was another complication. Then the Red officials had seized the existing supplies for the Moscow district on the ground (true) that their orders had been disobeyed. An influx into the towns proved useless, as the Ukraine food depôts are supplied locally, and there were no supplies. Famine and plague followed, and thousands of starving people roamed the country in a state of almost incredible destitution. Apparently the Ukraine had to be taught a lesson, and it was driven home with all that callous disregard for human misery and murder that has always characterised Slav leaders.

The strange fatalism of the Russian peasant in life and in literature has always puzzled the Western mind, but it was easier to understand it on these vast plains which stretched for mile after mile towards the grey

north. Life for these people was simply a never-ending struggle for food, as it is in most parts of Communist Russia, and wherever this is true man cannot hope to rise much above the animal stage. The Government appeared to them much as the Governments of Ivan the Terrible and the Mongol Khans must have appeared to the peasants—that is to say in the guise of tax officials, sequestrators, military organisers, conscriptors of labour for public works, and merciless judges, using the penal colony and the gun in place of fire and knout.

It is doubtful if some English people living at home all their lives can appreciate the lightness with which human life is held in this and other countries, geographically European, to say nothing of the East. They imagine other nations only a degree or so behind themselves in civilisation, culture and morals, but they are sadly mistaken, for although distance is conquered, there are still thousands of years between those countries which lead and those which follow—a truth well known to our pro-consuls in every continent.

Wages are a little higher in the Ukraine than in Central Russia, but they were still at the bare subsistence level, and almost everyone was paid chiefly in kind. The officials responsible for the famine had been removed to other areas, and there were severe restrictions on the movement of foreigners, while any Ukrainian wishing to leave his *kolkhoz* (collective farm) even to visit a friend in a neighbouring town—had to apply for an official permit.

Everywhere in the Ukraine is the fear of war and *Osoviakhim* branches function on every collective. Thousands of women are in this organisation, but the women's army battalions were being disbanded as a result of scandals. One of the five Marshals—Yagoda, most promising advocate of the women's units, was found to have a mistress in a Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the chief women's battalion, and some of her officers were involved in more sensational affairs. Once Yagoda's mouth was shut and the Home Office

men allowed freedom of investigation, disbandment was only a question of time.

Germany is looked on as the inevitable enemy, and I was reminded by old peasants that the Kaiser held the Ukraine in 1918, and fed his army on its rich harvests.

But if the Russian leaders are encouraging militarism, the Ukrainians did not strike me as warlike. They are not swashbucklers, and ask only to be left alone to build up agricultural efficiency with the strange new machines from Stalingrad and Kharkov. Nevertheless, their opinions count for nothing, for to-day as for a thousand years in Russia it is only the decisions of the aristocracy that are enforced. " Public Opinion " is manufactured by Stalin and the Commissariat for Home Affairs.

There was a great deal of talk about Trotskyism in the Ukraine towns, and it was believed that the Fourth International had many agents in the cities and in the administration. The disillusionment of the second and third grade leaders with the dictatorship had apparently taken this form. Stalin's ferocious attacks on the man he betrayed had had a boomerang effect, for thousands of Red officers who served under Trotsky in the revolutionary wars can never believe the stories told about him in *Izvestia* and *Pravda*. Then the continual conspiracies of high officers find in Trotskyism a convenient platform for their ambitions. The censorship has hidden the extent of this movement from the world, but the recurring " purges " and trials really indicate its progress. The " confessions " extorted from the accused men can be discounted, as they are obtained through promises of open or secret reprieves or threats of diabolical reprisals against wives and relatives, and also by producing " confessions " made by other persons, involving the accused men. Those writers who explain the confessions away by ascribing them to the peculiar Russian temperament or character should know better than that. Russians may be dirty, lazy, phlegmatic, verbose and introspective—and often are—but they are not so very different from other races as all that ! If they searched

their memories they might recall that peculiar confessions have been obtained at big Russian espionage trials from people of other nationalities.

Stalin's attempts to brand Trotsky as a traitor to his country are ridiculous when examined away from the feverish atmosphere of his party demonstrations. Here is a typical attack made by Stalin at the 1937 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party—

" The restoration of Capitalism, the liquidation of the collective farms, the re-establishment of a system of exploitation ; an alliance with the Fascist forces in Germany, and Japan to bring nearer a war with the Soviet Union ; a struggle for war and against the policy of peace ; the territorial dismemberment of the Soviet Union, handing the Ukraine to the Germans and the Maritime Province to the Japanese ; the scheming for the military defeat of the Soviet Union in the event of her being attacked by hostile states, and, as a means of achieving these aims, wrecking, diversion, individual terror against the leaders of the Soviet power, espionage in favour of Japano-German Fascist forces—such was the political platform of contemporary Trotskyism as unfolded by Pyatakov, Radek and Sokolnikov.

" It is clear that the Trotskyists could not but conceal such a platform from the people, from the working class. And they concealed it not only from the working class, from the Trotskyist rank and file, but even from the upper Trotskyist leadership composed of a small handful of 30 or 40 people.

" Political leaders concealing their platform not only from the working class but from the Trotskyist rank and file, and not only from the Trotskyist rank and file, but also from the upper Trotskyist leadership—such is the physiognomy of contemporary Trotskyism ! "

Read in cold blood, this verbatim translation is obviously rubbish—a political " platform " concealed even from the leaders of the party is indeed a phenomenon. No doubt Trotsky would add that his platform was so well concealed that even he himself had not spoken of it !

Nevertheless, Trotsky's agents *are* at work throughout European Russia and in the military offices, and Stalin was not exaggerating when in the same speech he said : " Wherein then lies the strength of the contemporary wreckers, the Trotskyists ? Their strength lies in the fact that the party membership card gains for them political confidence and opens all our institutions and organisations to them." This is all true.

The " wreckers," meaning the people resolved to overthrow the present dictatorship, are the strongest in the Kuzbas and Donbas, where there was considerable trouble in the 1936–37 winter. Stalin ordered a general " verification of leaders, work and workers " in all industries, and this was followed by another orgy of party expulsions, executions and life-sentences. Innocent relatives of unfortunate officials were, as usual, condemned to a living death in the labour colonies, and " examples " were made in every republic.

In 1934 I had been in the main corridor of the Smolny Institute in Leningrad—shortly afterwards the scene of Kirov's murder.

The death of his friend intensified Stalin's fear of assassination—a fear which dogs the heels of all tyrants.

Not that the death of a dictator would mean the fall of the regime—Communism is much too firmly entrenched. The system would survive under his successors, and the world-wide work of undermining religion, family life, and social order, and organising strikes, revolution and anarchy would continue.

In the Ukraine, as in the north, the Red educationists were seeing to it that the youngsters were trained to ridicule the image of Jesus and his teachings and to hate the outside world. A doctrine of hate and fear—reminiscent of Europe's brutish past.

I regained the Roumanian frontier without much difficulty, the signals system proving effective. The whole journey had cost only a few hundred *lei*.

I had found no reasons to revise any of my previous impressions of Soviet Russia.

I have been four times to Germany in the last three years. At no time since my first visit have I been troubled by officials or party agents. Everywhere I have found courtesy and politeness and excellent hospitality. My regard for the German people and their traditional virtues has been deepened by these visits, and no one who knows them will hold them responsible for the excesses committed by any political regime.

Berlin seemed to be showing more flags than ever, and I remarked on this to my landlord Karl, who was, he said, an " Independent."

" Yes, everybody has a flag now," he answered. " The Party sells them. It is a business."

" Were there more flags than this in pre-war Germany ? "

Karl caught the drift of the question. " No, not nearly so many. But take it from me, there will be no war. There are too many men like me left who know what it is."

The leaders, however, did not share Karl's opinion. I found speeches and newspaper articles more sabre-rattling than ever, and the vague hints of war against Russia and other " challengers " of 1934 had become open threats.

Hitler's diplomatic victories had shown that the spirit and politics of 1914 could not only be revived, but could be expanded, and certainly the new world-wide propaganda campaign addressed to all Germans and carried on by a 24-hour radio sender, an army of agents, and literature in a score of languages, was ten times more efficient that the old Pan-German network of the pre-war Chancelleries.

Germany was again the greatest armed power in Europe, again dominated by a military caste—headed this time by men of considerably greater intelligence than Wilhelm II and Bethman-Hollweg. If proofs of this were necessary they were available in the diplomatic record of the Nazi Cabinet—a record of unbroken success. The Nazi leaders have passed beyond the stage when they were content to tear up the Versailles and Locarno treaties, remilitarise the Rhineland and stir

up revolution in Austria. That belongs to history. To the present and future belongs their new challenge to Britain for world supremacy, for the economic and spiritual domination of every continent. In this dream the march of the German armies into the Ukraine and into Moscow is only a single episode. Did I say dream? But dreams have a habit of coming true when they are backed by energy, self-confidence, cold calculation and an unscrupulous and callousness recalling the worst of the power-drunk Roman Emperors.

Hitler may be a dreamer, but to him the term can only be applied as praise. Those biographers and critics who describe him as a tool and as a hysterical paranoiac can be dismissed. He who described him as "a ferocious reactionary" was nearer the mark. He has won because he was more unscrupulous than any of his opponents, and because he gambled correctly on the unwillingness of lawyer-politicians, "plain, blunt men," and trade union leaders who had long since lost faith in Marx, revolutions, themselves, and everything else—to fight for the masses they were supposed to be leading. Konrad Heiden, who has written the most illuminating book on Hitler, comments on the frequency with which his subject has broken his pledged word. It is typical of the man, while the best searchlight on the party programme and its promises is provided by Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels. "If I had had my way there would have been no programme!"

More and more ex-radicals were taking service with the regime, and they found no difficulty in finding arguments for the switch. But all of us who listened to them knew that the best argument was the rubber truncheon in the background, although politeness forbade such coarse allusions, and there were also, no doubt, other arguments.

At Berlin parties there were discussions about Hitler's successor, and Rudolf Hess, the present Chancellor's deputy, was the favourite choice. The rivalry between Goering and Goebbels had sunk from prominence under pressure from above. Possibilities of a restoration

of the monarchy were scouted. I expressed the intention of going to Hausdoorn to discuss this and other matters with the ex-Kaiser, but desisted when Count von Sell, the ex-Kaiser's private secretary, put me on my honour " not to disturb the privacy of his Imperial and Royal Majesty," and assured me that his master was unwilling to discuss such questions at the present juncture.

Frau Goering's receptions were rivalling those of Frau Goebbels in lavish display. Goering's wife was formerly Emmy Sonnemann, the opera star, and she was naturally more successful in gathering stage, film, and concert celebrities at her functions than her rivals. But the precautions taken to guard against admitting anyone of Jewish race must have been wearisome.

Wages were much as they were in 1934—far below the British standards, and the labour camp system had now been organised to cover both sexes.

Anti-Jewish propaganda was as violent as ever, and the repression campaign, though now sporadic, showed no signs of being halted. Camps for the training in agricultural work of Jews awaiting transfer to Palestine and South America had been opened, but as far as I could discover only Jews possessing several thousand marks were eligible for admission. There were conflicting stories about " exceptions " being made in the case of wealthy Jewish bankers and business men, who were, it was said, being retained as indispensable.

Cases of graft and corruption by Nazi leaders continued to reach the gossip circles of Kurfurstendamm society—they were usually suppressed or covered by " resignations " in the Press, and party officials told me that a new " purge " of the party was badly needed to get rid of the crooks and " broadminded " provincial officials. This did, indeed, seem probable from the amounts of money misappropriated. In Hitler's autobiography he has said that in selecting his men he paid no attention whatsoever to their moral characters and aimed deliberately at the most dissatisfied and anti-social elements. The new scandals are a tribute to his candour.

The opposition groups in and out of Germany were showing more signs of life than in 1934, but there was no longer much talk of a collapse of the regime. Rather was there hope of an external adventure on which Hitler would stake his future. Meanwhile, the Nazi grip has been tightened until the whole Reich is now prostrate under the field boots of the leading Quadrumvirate. The "gentleman class," best typified by ex-cavalry Captain von Papen, himself an ex-Chancellor, is powerless against the controlled Press, the party espionage service and the political generals Fritsch and von Blomberg, and a few sops are thrown to them in the way of preferment.

Those officers considered doubtful in their support of the Government—and they are many—are being steadily removed or retired from commands, and their places taken by "dependables." These manœuvres, which could only be operated with the consent of Marshal von Blomberg, reveal fresh betrayals of the standards of the old army, and there have been some bitter and open comments in the officers' clubs. The decision to honour the memory of General von Schleicher, murdered by Hitler's order on June 30, 1934, was the most prominent outburst.

But the leaders are undisturbed by Berlin and garrison gossip. Indeed, their first term of office has increased their self-confidence to such an extent that the more moderate Nazis, including Reichsbank Governor Dr. Schacht, deem it necessary to administer occasional douches.

"Revenge for 1914," is the keynote of German policy to-day—and more than revenge—the domination of the East aimed at by the German Emperor. The keynote of the new speeches is this: "The democracies are weak and effete. Germany is strong and grows stronger. Our people are ill fed because we have no colonies. These were robbed from us in the war lost by the Jews. The robber-nations refuse us justice. All right—they shall feel the weight of our invincible sword!" In this respect at least, Hitler knows that he will have the support of the military caste in its entirety.

CHAPTER SIX

ROUMANIA

A YEAR BEFORE I VISITED HIS COUNTRY A ROUMANIAN manufacturer visiting London told me that the Iron Guard Fascists were not really important, and were chiefly irresponsible students.

But as I watched Jewish lawyers being attacked in broad daylight in the main street of Bucharest by blue-uniformed, swastika-armletted young men, I felt a doubt.

Anti-Semitism has spread through Roumania like a prairie fire in recent months. Many of the leading police officials are known to be sympathetic to Fascist aspirations, and the unwillingness of the police to interfere at recent outbreaks has been obvious.

Roumania has not progressed far since the war, when she received great accessions of territory. The large army has eaten up some of the country's resources, but the chief factor making for stagnation is the prevalence of bribery. Business men at the mercy of parasitic officials have been compelled to organise protective societies.

Every Roumanian official who has control of a rubber stamp in Bucharest seems to expect a "rake-off" of one sort or another.

Public opinion was less critical than I had expected, however, and wide allowances are made for bureaucratic inefficiency. This is just as well, for the Roumanian Civil Service must be one of the most cumbrous in Europe. Ministers taking office have a habit of providing jobs for scores of friends, and this has not helped matters.

In their propaganda the Iron Guard have seized

eagerly on these abuses, but their chief line of attack is the wealth of the Jewish merchants and the influence of Madame Lupescu over King Carol.

Madame Lupescu, the red-haired, green-eyed Jewess who infatuated the King at a chance meeting some years ago, has been responsible for a series of political storms. Her friends certainly have advanced through her influence, and her opponents in the Cabinet have rarely survived for long.

All uniformed Fascist societies have been banned by the Minister of the Interior (M. Inculetz), and in the Hotel Regina in Bucharest I watched bets being made on the time that would elapse before he was placed on the black list of the Iron Guard.

M. Duca, the Liberal Premier, who was placed on this list, was found murdered shortly afterwards.

In political life so many Roumanians who started as poor men have died leaving great fortunes that the workers have lost faith in the old parties.

In Bessarabia I found that economic development has hardly begun, and main roads near Kishinev are impassable for cars. Transport and communications are deplorable in many areas, although many millions of *lei* have been allotted at different times for construction.

The increasing boldness of the Iron Guard is an ominous sign. In Moldavia the peasants are well organised under the Fascist sub-leaders of Codreanu, the chief terrorist.

Codreanu, who makes speeches by moonlight to crowds of young unemployed and who is worshipped by many young students, is a former student of Jassy University, where he shot a police inspector in an election fight.

In Jassy I learned that Codreanu and the other Iron Guard chiefs, Professor Cuza and M. Goga, had a big following. One of their adjutants admitted to me that they were in very close touch with Hitler, and the swastika is the official emblem of the movement. On entering their headquarters I was greeted with the Nazi salute and the Nazi greeting.

Kishinev, which is only a short distance from the

Russian border, I found to be under a semi-military control commission. Strenuous efforts are being made to destroy all Russian influence—no easy task, for Bessarabia was a Russian province till 1918.

The absence of democracy and the hostility between the big Roumanian garrison and the mixed population has been a great help to the Fascists, and blue uniforms and black berets are worn openly, in spite of the ban.

Jewish shopkeepers are continually interfered with, and recently a train was seized by forty Iron Guards, who held it for several hours. All Jewish passengers were robbed and beaten with lengths of rubber hose.

At Sinaia I visited the royal palace, which lies amid beautiful scenery, and listened to the gossip of Court officials, who are much less discreet than in other Balkan States, through Queen Marie's accessibility and the King's dislike of ceremony and excessive dignity.

Queen Marie is exceedingly popular with all classes, and she is given the credit for most of the country's gains after the war. She receives visitors in peasant costume, and likes to go shopping without attendants. The King also makes frequent unannounced excursions.

The popularity of the Queen-Mother and her son with the peasants is not, however, duplicated in the case of other prominent Roumanians. Among the hard-working peasants of Transylvania I found a deep resentment of Bucharest methods and high taxes. Many of the workers hardly ever handle cash, and live under very primitive conditions, labouring literally from dawn to dusk for food and shelter.

The Iron Guard leaders have attracted to their standard the usual squads of thugs, ex-criminals, adventurers, and students disinclined for work. Their foreign policy includes the smashing of the Little Entente and a close economic alliance with Germany. Until recently few responsible people in the country took the movement seriously, but the slogans of "Down with the Bucharest grafters" and "Perish the Jew" are spreading everywhere.

Carol's expulsion of his younger brother, the Old Etonian Prince Nicholas, from the royal family was the occasion of a new political battle, for it was on Madame Lupescu's persuasion that the decision was made. Elena Dumitrescu, the blonde commoner loved by Nicholas, was already calling herself princess, and Nicholas was notoriously in touch with the anti-Jewish, anti-Lupescu Iron Guard.

The battle was won by Lupescu. After Nicholas was stripped of his rank—he took the name Nicholas Brana —he retired to Snagov Castle, near the capital, and refused to take Carol's advice to leave the country.

The Iron Guard issued a proclamation : " Never has a prince been so treated. The only case against Nicholas is a morganatic marriage."

Lupescu then advised Carol to force a declaration from Nicholas, and this was done. He said : " Because I hear rumours connecting me with political groups which can damage the country, I declare that I have no personal or other sympathy with any political faction." This was all in face of the known facts, and when Nicholas left the country shortly afterwards Lupescu could congratulate herself on a resounding success.

Lupescu has a good business brain, and manufacturers and their agents for speedy results are well advised to see her, for she has a knack of cutting through the maze of official and unofficial red tape which surrounds all Roumanian state business. A few Lupescus are badly needed in the Roumanian Dobrudja. Anyone in a hurry to get permits or contracts stamped may have to pass the " cigarette box test." This consists of seating the visitor at a table, asking his business, and asking him to have a cigarette from a box in front of him, after pointing out difficulties. The official then leaves the room. The box is empty, and if a large enough tip is not found when the owner returns he repeats his offer. In this and other ways a polite form of corruption is widespread.

The Government was organising a new political purge of its services, and the education department was one

of the first to be dealt with, so that Roumanian school teachers were facing new problems.

In Bucharest any secondary schoolmaster who has lived in the same house or shared a meal with an Iron Guard supporter is liable to dismissal, and the Government is organising a careful " comb out " of all suspected opponents. This investigation is directed by agents of Lupescu. In Kishinev I found that the Iron Guards had the backing of a section of the garrison, and as the province is under martial law this gives them some control of public affairs, in spite of Bucharest decrees. Secondary school teachers in the town are placed between two fires, and most of them are taking the line of least resistance—denying membership of the Iron Guard while at the same time they pay a secret levy to the " Blue House."

Promotion systems based on merit or seniority have never survived for long in Roumania, and in the secondary schools masters applying for better appointments must be well supplied with cash or have friends in Government circles if they are to succeed. In the areas inhabited by racial minorities, such as Transylvania and the Bukovina, masters are expected to act as agents for the Government in the work of denationalisation, and to report any traces of anti-Roumanian sentiment in the work of their students to the authorities. This system caused a revolt in a Cluj school, where the masters were pro-Hungarian, but the objectors were soon dismissed and replaced by Government nominees.

Hours are long in the secondary schools, but salaries are high in the upper grades, and a nation-wide pension scheme has been drafted. There are still vast tracts of the country which have never been touched by the Education Ministry's activities—Bessarabia being one of the worst examples of this neglect—and when the department is reorganised there will no doubt be a lack of qualified masters. Meanwhile those men who have been dismissed by the present Government are being approached with offers of paid employment by the Iron

Guard. At their Blue House at Jassy I was told that the few teachers already enlisted in their ranks were proving excellent propagandists. My informant reminded me with a smile that Mussolini had once been a teacher !

In Bucharest Jewish head masters are receiving threatening letters from the terrorists, and although these have been disregarded in the past, the recent outrages have changed the atmosphere, and there is a constant stream of callers at the Ministry and at Madame Lupescu's apartments demanding Government action.

The moral tone of Bucharest society is notoriously low, and the unsavoury liaisons of public personalities were common gossip. A strenuous effort to make Bucharest " the Paris of the Balkans " has been going on ever since the war, but some observers would think that too many of the least praiseworthy features of Parisian life are being incorporated in the model.

I thought the stories about a corset shop for men were untrue, but I was wrong, and it is well patronised by cavalry officers. Bucharest society talks French whenever possible, and some matrons seemed to consider their own language a mere appendage. Those shops which wished to cater to the wealthy and titled classes must bear French names or have a French staff, and the hostess who does not buy her gowns and hats in Paris is risking criticism. Queen Marie tried to break this habit by wearing embroidered national dress in public, but failed.

King Carol's personality is one which invites stories and gossip, but it was hard to differentiate between truth and falsehood. He is himself careless of public opinion, and likes to leave his palace in a fast car and visit some small town festivity incognito. A country fair always attracts him, and he likes much to mingle unrecognised with the crowds, if this is possible. It was on one of these jaunts that he first met Lupescu. But like other rulers, Carol is finding increasing difficulty in masquerading as the man in the street.

One at least of Bucharest's problems had been dealt with efficiently—that of wandering vagrants. Bucharest

is the only capital in Europe without beggars. All individuals found demanding alms or without means of subsistence are arrested and classified. Able-bodied men are put to work on the roads or organised in squads for street cleaning. For this work they are paid a wage that enables them to secure food and shelter, but nothing more. Old people, and those unfit for work, are sent to vagrant homes outside the city. So well planned is this system that tramps now give Bucharest a wide berth, in spite of its wealth and promise of " pickings."

In many provinces there has been little or no economic progress for a generation. Conditions on the deplorable roads were not improved by the recklessness of the bus and car drivers, who also thought nothing of taking short cuts across fields to avoid broken or waterlogged stretches. Many of the roads marked on maps would be better described as " ways " or " normal routes." The most dependable means of transport I found was the bullock cart, and sensible people do as little travelling as possible. In northern Roumania there was more ready money in circulation than in other parts of the Balkans, but great gloom. Even a slight widening of educational opportunities has made many of the young men dissatisfied with the old life, and thousands have left the villages for the towns. An antagonism has thus sprung up between the older workers and the teachers and officials. Living in the dusty villages, where human beings and animals share the same roof, and where the most elementary notions of sanitation and hygiene are seldom known, I could not blame the young men.

Living conditions vary a good deal from province to province, and there is, indeed, little in common between the hard-working Bulgarian Roumanians of the Dobrudja and the servile, pleasure-loving peasants of the capital district. In the north I was reminded of Russia by the immense stretches of grey earth and occasional groups of wooden shanties. In Transylvania conditions are still primitive. The hunters and trappers on the lower slopes of the Carpathians live a very self-contained life.

There are few books and fewer newspapers. School teachers have problems that would daunt some of their kind in the West, for it is only in recent years that literacy has spread to frontiers as far as this. The province is alive with legends of werewolves and vampires, and each of the many ruined castles has its grim history. Superstitions attach to almost every action, and seem quite normal in this feudal atmosphere. For it is one thing to scoff at a legend in a modern town, with its shops, buses and brick houses, and another to hear it discussed in all seriousness at the door of a cottage in the Carpathian foot-hills, with the talk punctuated by the howling of distant wolves, wind-borne through the darkness. Many of the people in this area are Hungarians, and they are bold enough to display their old flag whenever opportunity comes. And they have a profound contempt for the Roumanian officials at Cluj.

In Bucharest political circles the growth of the Iron Guard was considered the main cause of the Government's changing foreign policy. It was pointed out to me that the Germans, to whom Carol was attached by sentimental and family ties, were no longer weak, but actually dominated Central European politics. In the last war Roumania had been entirely overrun by the German armies, and she had much more at stake to-day, with her existing racial minorities and their problems. The Iron Guard was not in a position to dictate a policy, but the twenty years of anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the country had had its effect, and was now a possible threat to the Government. Then the effects of the new German economic penetration were obvious. If war broke out, the Ukraine was a probable battleground, and a neutral pro-German Roumania or an actively pro-German Roumania with a supporting army in the Dniester would stand to gain. A Roumania tied to the Little Entente, to France, and thus indirectly to the U.S.S.R., had everything to lose. Then there were the internal complications, such as the unfortunate publicity centred on the King, with which I was doubtless

familiar, which meant that one must proceed warily in deciding policy. And it could not be denied that unscrupulous individuals, of whom, alas, there were many, could make a lot of trouble in the non-Roumanian areas controlled by Bucharest. And much more in the same vein.

But the most galling of all arguments was the statement that the initiative in European politics had now obviously passed from Britain and the League of Nations, and the Balkan countries could therefore not be blamed for reconsidering treaties and alliances. Could I deny the statements made by the British Ministers in London and Geneva, quoted in the Roumanian Press? No—then now I could see *why* M. Titulescu had been retired, and why Carol, who has a Jewish mistress, is being pulled steadily into the orbit of the expanding Third Reich! I was also gently reminded that the Balkan Governments were rather sensitive about matters of prestige, and while none of the British ministers ever appeared in the peninsula, there were frequent comings and goings between Berlin and the various capitals, while the speeches of the Nazi leaders also proved that they were aware of the countries lying to the south-east!

Relations between Russia and Roumania have been only slightly improved by the new barter agreement, but there is still no possibility of Russia's recognition of the Bessarabia conquest.

On maps I saw in Russia the U.S.S.R. was always coloured red, Bessarabia red with white stripes, and Roumania white. And Communist agents caught in Roumania are punished with draconic severity.

There is certainly much combustible material in the country—enough to start several big fires. The trouble is that the voice of the peasant is rarely the voice of the man in the uniform or the frock coat.

Roumania is rich in natural resources—oil, minerals, timber, and fertile soil. But these cannot be properly utilised so long as political gangs are allowed to roam the country without serious challenge, and so long as a corrupt military aristocracy decides policy and spends taxes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AUSTRIA

THE ABYSSINIAN WAR WAS EAGERLY STUDIED IN Vienna, for Austrians knew that the fate of their country must well depend upon the result. It is now obvious that Hitler's oath to join Austria to Germany was no mere theatricalism and another attempt at a *putsch* is expected when a favourable opportunity shows itself.

I found that everyone in Vienna talks politics these days, and even in the beautiful gardens of Schönbrunn, the former palace of the Habsburgs, I heard the prospects of a German invasion being discussed.

The " Christian Corporativism " of the Government is almost openly scoffed at, while Nazi cells are to be found everywhere. Only the police espionage system checks the growth of the opposition parties, for since the death of Chancellor Dollfuss the ruling Party has been unable to seize hold on the popular imagination.

Several thousand young men are interned in the concentration camps that are dotted all over the country. While the Government is attacked for holding them in custody without trial, their release would certainly be the signal for fresh demonstrations. So that it is hardly surprising to find political and industrial leaders are considering the prospects of a Habsburg restoration.

The recent Franz Josef exhibition was actually promoted by the Cabinet, and all bans have been removed from monarchist papers. Archduke Otto's photograph can be seen in the windows of big shops in every town, and there has been a notable revival of

activity on the part of certain members of the old aristocracy.

No one doubts that another upheaval is coming.

Rumours of hidden stores of arms in the possession of agitators continue to circulate in the capital, and in the newspapers there are reports of secret drillings. Large reinforcements of police have been drafted into the Heiligenstadt district in order to stamp out revolutionary propaganda, but from what little I saw of the fervour of the young "Reds," this will not be easy. It was in this district that the vast blocks of low-rented flats for which post-war Vienna became famous were built, and the housing estates were the scenes of some of the worst fighting of recent years.

Two hours' journey from the capital is Semmering, the sports centre, where a small town of hotels and boarding-houses has grown up on the mountainside. The magnificent scenery of the district is known all over Europe, and I found Hungarians, Serbs, Roumanians, Czechs and Frenchmen enjoying the alpine air. After a strenuous day's climbing or walking in the pine-woods, the visitors gathered to organise a "merry night," as they call it, and the choruses of cheerful songs were roared out over the pass in the traditional style. Semmering is still comparatively prosperous, not having been so dependent on German tourists.

At nearby Hirschwang, from where the open cars of the aerial railway are borne along miles of cable to the summit of the Rax Alp, I met a Graz shopkeeper on holiday. He talked of his weariness of the endless political arguments, and of the wish of the business community for social peace. In convincing detail he described how the trade of the country had been ruined by the separation of the agricultural districts from their natural economic centres and markets.

Nowhere in corporative Austria is it possible to forget the threat of the police state—the more ruthless in its sporadic swoopings because of the uncertain hold of the Government. The future of the republic looks dark

and troubled, but as my landlady philosophised : " We have seen so many changes here in Vienna that we never worry nowadays."

It was typical of the Austrian spirit that several old Social-Democrat signs still remained on outbuildings of the Schönbrunn Palace, which had been utilised by the Party before its suppression. And a few Vienna streets still bear the names of well known " Reds " ! Indeed, the Viennese seem to have an unshakeable sang-froid, which enables them to treat revolutions and wars as regrettable misfortunes, to be got over as quickly as possible, so that the niceties of civilised conduct can re-emerge.

Chancellor Schuschnigg seemed mainly occupied with army affairs, and with good reason, for in Austria's involved internal politics the army is the deciding factor, now that Prince Stahremberg has been dismissed and his legion of " Grey Moochers " placed under a cloud.

Austria's intention of creating a new army in defiance of the peace treaties was first announced in 1934, when Chancellor Dollfuss drew the teeth of the chief opposition party. In fact, the Chancellor's boldness on this point was one of the chief reasons for his popularity in the army. Dr. Schuschnigg hesitated to confirm the half-promise of his predecessor, in view of the awkward political situation in Central Europe, but the decision has at last been taken, and the long-filed plan is now being rushed through at top speed.

The first step was to gather statistics of the able-bodied men of military age, and in a police-run state like Austria this was a comparatively easy matter. The Austrian police have been granted extraordinary powers in order to deal with the widespread network of opposition groups, and, in the event of mobilisation, they will certainly leave fewer loopholes for evading military service than the federal police of 1914.

In Vienna I found no enthusiasm for the new army, the decision to form which was, however, considered

inevitable. It was clear, nevertheless, that the Chancellor had gained prestige by the decision, and he is much more popular with the soldiers than when he first assumed office. He is no longer spoken of as a " political lawyer," and is rarely seen in public out of uniform.

Men of the 1915 class were being called up, and before the end of the first year of reorganisation it was estimated that the army would receive an addition of 50,000 men. I heard other estimates in Vienna newspaper offices, and it was also common knowledge that a general mobilisation scheme had been approved by the Government.

The existing army is small but well-trained, although, of course, much of its equipment is old, and many of its guns are of war and pre-war pattern. It is an open secret, however, that it is riddled with centres of Nazi propaganda, and there was an illuminating glimpse of this on the occasion of the last *putsch*, when documents found on Nazi prisoners implicated several garrison commanders.

The fact is that propaganda for unity with Germany has been going on in Austria ever since the Armistice, and Hitler's Government has only intensified existing pressure. The Nazi agents promise high commands in the army of the Third Reich to " key " officers, and apparently those approached are loath to give information about such offers, even when they have been refused point-blank.

Officers and men are poorly paid, and the existing terms of service—shortly to be revised—are not attractive. Until 1936 only a very small amount of money had been appropriated for military purposes in the Budget, and this has naturally curtailed training experiments and weakened technical efficiency. From what I saw of the men, however, their quality is high, and the military colleges have an excellent reputation.

I had thought that there might be some antagonism in Vienna between the citizens and the garrison, in view of the heavy bombardment of the Ottakring and Heiligenstadt districts in 1934. But the people have

recognised that the troops on that occasion were only carrying out orders, and there is no bad blood. The huge Karl Marx Hof block has been repaired, although inside the hall and on the first floor the marks of shrapnel can still be traced.

I found Salzburg full of Nazis, and heard that great precautions were being taken to post only loyal officers and men to the mixed brigade in the frontier district. The fact that Hitler was Austrian-born, and spent his youth in Upper Austria, has no doubt affected opinion on the frontier, while the German Cabinet meets regularly at Hitler's chalet at Berchtesgaden, a few miles away. Swastikas are still chalked on the walls of unemployment bureaux and public offices in the northern towns. The unemployed young men are welcoming the army plans, especially those living in the rural areas. Tens of thousands of them have been without work since 1931. They receive 8s. a week benefit from the insurance fund when they first become unemployed, and when this is stopped, after a few weeks, they go into the so-called *freiwillige* (voluntary) Labour Corps, which is engaged on public works, afforestation, etc. Members of this Corps are paid 6d. for 8 hours' work, plus a packet of cigarettes and food. Naturally, they prefer the army to the Labour Corps.

Some of the *Heimwehr* leaders had suggested that their units should be incorporated in the new army on the pattern of the Blackshirt militia regiments of the Italian East Africa Army. I made enquiries at the War Ministry about this point, and heard most definite expressions of opinion from the Regular officers, who were, of course, more reticent about service matters. The army has a wholesome contempt for the semi-political " militia " originally organised by Prince Stahremberg, and this is understandable, for its ranks contain many with long police " records." In their dirty grey uniforms, they slouched about the streets, often unshaven, and were continually holding meetings of protest about the unfulfilled promises of their leaders. Several thousand

of these men are armed, however—a legacy of the civil war—and their future status is uncertain. It is quite certain that few of their leaders who are now applying for transfers to the army "with equivalent rank," will be satisfied—no matter what their influence may be in the *Bundesrat.*

In an inn in the Siebenbrunnengasse in Vienna, where I was lodging, I heard accounts of the new training schemes from soldiers of the Regular infantry and learned that gas training was being strongly emphasised. The shabbiness of the men I had seen in the Salzburg garrison was due to their only possessing one suit of service dress, and being compelled, so they informed me, to make up deficiencies out of their meagre pay. They were as critical of the *Heimwehr* as were their officers, and spoke of brawls that were hushed up by the police. The regiments which had refused to fire on the Socialist workers at Linz and Graz and elsewhere had not been disbanded, they added, but sent to the Tyrol for frontier duty. They thought that war with Yugoslavia might follow the return of the Archduke Otto—a matter which was one of the main topics of conversation in Vienna—and they were anxious to know what attitude Britain would take, Britain being a "moral guarantor" of existing Austrian frontiers.

There was everywhere in military circles a great admiration for this country, and a feeling of gratitude at the reception accorded by British public opinion to the news of Austrian rearmament. There had been a fear, apparently, that the decision would cause a serious international crisis.

Going down the Danube from Linz to Vienna the little steamer on which I had booked a passage called at a score of landing stages. A few hours after leaving Linz, scene of heavy fighting in recent years, we came to Weissenkirchen, where the crumbling ruins of Dürnstein, the castle in which Richard Cœur de Lion was imprisoned after his return from the Crusades, are situated. Below the turret from which local tradition

has it that the king was hailed by Blondel is a red-roofed inn called the Lion-Heart. But even here, in the big morning room, I heard talk of police searches for banned newspapers, and of refusals to amnesty local men gaoled for criticising the Government.

Schuschnigg's attempts to model himself on the dictator pattern patented by Mussolini were amusing Viennese society, and the Chancellor would have writhed had he been present at some functions. Vienna has seen the weaker side of too many famous men to accept a *poseur* at face value, and the Chancellor's new habit of appearing in uniform invited comment. Schuschnigg also stages some mass parades and demonstrations, at one of which he spoke from a 30 feet high wooden tower. He gave orders for flags and emblems to be displayed as lavishly as in Rome. But, like most political lawyers, Schuschnigg is cursed with a logical mind. And human beings are not particularly logical, and certainly cannot be ruled according to the rules in a book. Again, like most lawyers, Schuschnigg confuses the existence of things on paper with their existence in fact. This is indeed a serious political handicap (not confined to Schuschnigg) when dealing with men who make a sharp division between papers and actualities and are able to disregard the papers at will !

When I described the semi-fiasco that had resulted from one much-advertised Government demonstration to a Vienna society woman (a radical), she laughed and said : " Ha ! He'll be playing with lion cubs next. And if the Herr Bundeskanzler is eaten in a cage—that will be fine publicity ! "—She was alluding here to Mussolini's old practice of fondling little lion cubs in a cage in front of the motion-picture cameras—a practice that stopped when the lions began to grow up !

Schuschnigg's policy may be summed up in the word " Survival." So far it has been successful, for he has played off Germany against Italy and Italy against Germany, and the League and frontier guarantors

against both, with effective, if sometimes rather undignified, energy.

Schuschnigg himself would welcome a Habsburg restoration, as this would remove the Nazi danger for a time, at least. Mussolini is not in favour of a restoration, which would conflict with his plans for dominating the Balkans, and would seriously lessen his influence in Hungary. But with Schuschnigg he accepts the restoration threat as a check to German aspirations. And in the event of a challenge to his regime, a withdrawal of his support to Austria would certainly be a valuable bargaining counter in dealing with Berlin.

The Austrian leaders are meanwhile rearming with all speed and hoping to find a way of escape from the Italo-German pincers. Some business men hoped that Britain would intervene, as a guarantor of the frontier, if the Germans marched in, or staged another *coup d'état.* One said : " If everybody knew what England would do—if it was only said—the whole affair would be solved."

As for the Archduke Otto—he has rarely given any signs of intelligence, in spite of the small amount expected from those born in palaces by the modern world. Kaiser Franz-Josef—a man of great ability and character—may well have been right when he forecast that his house would fall after his death. And if it has now finally fallen no one will regret the passing of the Habsburgs save a few ignorant peasants, half-witted women, and the usual useless flotsam and jetsam which gathers around ornamental courts.

Not that the Habsburgs should need any instruction about their real value in the world, when the pretensions are stripped off. They were taught that four generations back by a young ex-artillerist !

CHAPTER EIGHT

HUNGARY

ALTHOUGH HUNGARY PASSED THROUGH A COMMUNIST revolution after the war, the aristocratic tradition dies hard, and is helped by the survivial of big estates. Feudal landlords are still held in great respect in the country districts, and anyone who attempts to revive the atmosphere of pre-war days is sure of sympathy.

Thus the late Prime Minister, General Gömbös, increased his followers when he fought a duel with a critic, and impoverished counts of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire who drive to the theatre in dilapidated barouches are still treated with a certain deference.

The men of the plains are lithe, bold-faced, and mahogany-skinned. Their free life in the saddle on these vast stretches of brown earth has given them a unique outlook on life. Many of them, I found, spent their working days—ten or twelve hours at a stretch—out of sight of their kind, with their horses as their only companions. Reserved in speech, they do not welcome strangers gladly, apparently feeling considerable suspicion.

Practically all transport in the northern plains—across which in former centuries Hun and Mongolian hordes poured—is by horse, and no one thinks a great deal of covering 50 miles a day. The women and children are nearly all good riders, and trotting behind one of the herds on a grey morning I recalled the 1935 International Horse Show in Rome, and the surprise of the crowd at the skill of the Hungarian women entrants.

Wages are very low. I found workers on the big farms who were earning the equivalent of only thirteen and fourteen pence a day. Prices are, however, also very low, and it is possible to make an extended journey over whole provinces for a few shillings.

As I went eastwards towards the Roumanian frontier housing conditions deteriorated. In the country around Nytreguhaza and Kisvarda the villages are collections of dingy shacks, and Western clothes are rarely seen.

In the towns there has been considerable proletarisation of the professional workers, and some of the younger clerks and shop managers have been driven back to their parents in the rural districts. Naturally they feel their position keenly, and cannot adjust themselves to the new conditions.

In the towns the hard-hit professional workers are the leaders of all kinds of radical movements, and were it not for the fact that all Hungarians are united in demanding treaty revision there would no doubt be a bitter party war.

Budapest has long been famous for the fine manners of its citizens, and in spite of the squalor in which many of the poor live there is still a high standard of courtesy.

Hungarian women are very good-looking, and have a natural flair for clothes. Very little lipstick is used, although there has been no official criticism, as in Germany. The ambition of most Hungarian middle-class mothers with marriageable daughters is for them to make a match with Englishmen or Americans.

The royal palace and the castle hill seem to rise out of the Danube, which divides the city into its two constituents of Buda and Pest. By night the embankments are alive with hundreds of electric lamps, and the promenades are crowded.

On Sundays the crowds flock to the Buda side, where there are mineral springs, Roman baths, and many hills and woods for picnic parties.

The splendid buildings erected by the Habsburgs, the noble churches, statues, squares, and six fine bridges

make up a delightful picture, which is perhaps more beautiful at night when the roar of the traffic is hushed and Hungarian music can be heard on all sides.

But the shadow of the economic depression is never far away. Great numbers of beggars come out at night to patrol the main streets. Strenuous efforts have been made to rid the city of them, but there is a constant influx from the impoverished country-side. Some of them are very audacious, and in the Maria Valeria Utca I watched one accosting army officers in uniform, while another was trying to enter hotels !

In the Attila Baths at Buda I watched the wealthier merchants and their families drinking the spring water. From the bridge above a group of ragged youths looked down with envious eyes. Hungary is full of such contrasts, which seem to be more glaring than in western countries, although Hungary is so much poorer.

There is little chance of Archduke Otto returning, business men told me. The Regent (Admiral Horthy), who is universally respected and is noted for his forthright methods and speeches, has apparently no intention of inviting a Habsburg return.

So that Hungary remains in the anomalous position of being a kingdom without a king ! Otto, it is well known, looks on his return as being merely a matter of time, and he could no doubt rely on the powerful landlords in the event of the present Government being dissolved. But a pro-German feeling is being developed everywhere, and Nazi policy is of course resolutely set against a Habsburg return here as in Austria.

I found German commercial travellers in various outlandish centres of the eastern provinces, where there was hardly any trade save barter, and have no doubt that the new economic penetration is part of a definite scheme of the Berlin Government.

Hungarians are strenuously pro-British—a result of British loans, open-handed tourists, and a wholesome respect for our institutions. Britain is the model country that Hungarian schoolboys are asked to admire, and

even on the great plain a herdsman asked me if the stories of British unemployed men receiving three pengoes a day were true.

I said they were, for I had drawn as much myself. He thought it amazing, for he earned only half that amount for his strenuous labours.

Indeed, many everyday things in British urban life seem like Arabian Nights wonders to the poorer workers of Eastern Europe. My herdsman grasped the arm of his little son and told him that when he grew up he must go to the country where nobody had less than three pengoes a day.

The steep fall in agricultural prices since 1931 has had some strange effects on life in many villages. One of the strangest is the absence of ready money in the areas occupied solely by peasant cultivators. In the old days the peasants carried their produce to the local markets at regular intervals, and with the cash obtained there purchased manufactured goods and such necessaries as oil and salt in the village shops. But when prices fell so low that it was not worth while to make journeys over difficult country, a new barter system developed, and nowadays many thousands of workers never handle money in the form of notes or coin. A new currency in the shape of eggs and dairy produce has emerged, however, and some of the multiple shop firms in Budapest were actually considering re-opening closed-down branches in certain villages—with barter prices ticketed on their goods !

In Eastern Hungary I found the conditions of the workers had actually improved in one respect as a result of the slump. In one village near the Roumanian frontier in which I unsuccessfully sought for lodgings I was told that whereas five years ago everything but the barest necessaries was sent to the market, to-day more eggs and bacon and butter are consumed by the peasants, who improved their tables when the surpluses first appeared, and are now unwilling to go back to the old frugality. At the same time, the lack of manu-

factured goods has brought serious difficulties. Little oil is burned, and at night the villages are usually shrouded in thick darkness. Many post offices have been closed, and the standard of clothing is deplorable. The women-folk show commendable ingenuity in maintaining some kind of neat appearance, but the men and boys are dressed in all kinds of rags. I have seen tweed jackets of a type popular in Budapest donned in three portions in Tokay, while garments tied together with string excite no stares.

Poverty and difficulties have not made the workers miserable, however. One met everywhere the wandering gypsies, who are continually staging entertainments, for which they are paid in kind, and they alone would suffice to banish gloom. Few of them know a note of music, but rhythm seems part of their make-up, and they can conjure melody out of the unlikeliest of instruments. Their shows often last six or seven hours, until the performers are completely exhausted.

Among the herdsmen of the great Hortobagy plain I found not only an acceptance of the new moneyless existence, but something like contempt for the ways of commercial communities. Most of these men handled some money, however, and their rents were paid in cash as a rule, and not in eggs and chickens and bread, as I had seen further east. The herdsmen are wonderful riders, and it is a fine sight to see the herds of fiery horses thunder over the vast brown plain, followed by their masters cracking long whips and shouting at the tops of their voices.

The horsemen were not ashamed of poverty, and made no excuses for the absence of luxuries when I visited their whitewashed cottages. In this they differed from the unemployed in Budapest, who seem to feel their position very keenly. In this city of contrasts former aristocrats of the Habsburg Empire rub shoulders with White Russian exiles—ex-colonels and generals—in the scramble for ill-paid jobs.

In the big *Pester Loyd* offices on the riverside, a young

reporter grumbled about his fate. Nothing ever happened, and people were trying to dance away their worries. Some of his friends were out of work, and were so ashamed of their shabbiness that they came out only at night. And so on. I had heard similar grumblings before. Many ex-business men were, I knew, living on a few slices of bread and dripping a day. Hungary was no country for a young man, the reporter thought. But he was as resolute for treaty revision as any of his neighbours, and perhaps it will be this unifying force that will mould the country's fate.

The country has passed through some fierce storms since the war. A Communist revolution was followed by both "red" and "white" terrors, and economic crisis succeeded famine.

Politically Hungary is united to-day as never before on the question of treaty revision. In many Budapest shops are large maps showing Hungary as she was before the war and after the Treaty of Trianon. Until I saw these I did not realise how more than two-thirds of the old Hungary had been torn away by the victorious Allies. It is this fact that has united all classes behind Admiral Horthy, the Regent. Horthy came into power after the Bela Kun Communist dictatorship, which spread disaster everywhere, and was more than anything else responsible for the severity of the peace terms. Throughout his fifteen years of office he has encouraged revisionist propaganda, ably seconded by General Gömbös and other leaders, with the result that Magyar patriotism is stronger to-day than ever it was under the Habsburgs.

I found the cost of living low in Budapest, and in the rural areas it was possible to get a week's board and lodgings for a few shillings. In Budapest, Tokay, and Szeged alike I heard the same story—if only the old frontiers were restored prosperity would arrive quickly. Such unanimity is impressive, although I cannot believe that revision would bring the rosy dawn painted by the politicians.

One of the chief grumbles is that the industrial areas were torn from the agricultural lands, and thus the incomes of both peasants and workers were lowered.

To-day millions of Hungarian peasants work for little more than a shilling a day—the standard wage on the big estates. After the war the big estates in many European countries were broken up, and hundreds of thousands of smallholdings created for the returned soldiers. But in Hungary land reform has moved sluggishly. One in four of the agricultural labourers does not own even a strip of soil. Between 1919 and 1921 several land acts were passed, but many estates are still run on semi-feudal lines. But although a landed aristocracy has survived, many of the titled owners are little better off than the working farmers, and have difficulty in providing a good education for their children.

In Bececozaba I was told that a wage of 18s. per week was now earned only by skilled technicians and managers. On the big estates many of the labourers are paid entirely in kind, their cottages being owned by their employers.

Yet the Hungarians think themselves well off compared to their unfortunate brethren across the frontier, who receive little sympathy from the Roumanian bureaucrats. One of Hungary's chief grievances is that millions of Magyars are now, under Roumanian, Czech, or Yugoslav rule, in most cases denied all "minority" rights and subjected to repressive "denationalisation."

Hungary has its own minority problem. The struggle for jobs in Budapest has led to a revival of anti-Semitism, and recently there have been raids on Jewish shops and offices. Several well-known Jews have already left the country, fearing that the movement will spread, although official policy is still one of toleration.

In some of the small towns anti-Semitism is providing new problems for harassed local authorities, but has not yet attained serious proportions.

I was invited to spend a shooting holiday in the

archiepiscopal forests on the Danube shores, but was reluctantly compelled to refuse, as I had work to do in Budapest. The forests abound with stags, wild boar and deer and are favourite haunts of the impoverished army officers.

If Hungary is poor, she has acquired some of the virtues of simplicity. The white-trousered herdsmen, in their ugly hats, were pictures of fitness, their rolling, long-striding gait and slender waists showing their habit of life. But even in the towns the young people looked remarkably well. This is because the nation has organised compulsory physical exercise for all youths up to the age of twenty-one. Sports clubs of all kinds have been opened in every large community, and these clubs are in national associations. The associations have their headquarters at the huge Sports House in Budapest, and they are supervised by the Board of Physical Education. Instructors are supplied through Dr. Szukorathy, Director of the Hungarian Royal College of Physical Education, whose watchword is " Discipline," which he believes can be achieved through exercise and will maintain the morale and strength of the state. Students from seventeen countries were taking courses under him—a splendid tribute to his capacity.

I was told here that nearly every Hungarian under forty belonged to a sports club of some kind and every young man I met seemed to be taking some kind of course. *Levente* (young men's clubs) parades in national dress were frequent. Water sports were as popular as gymnastics and riding, and according to the Press there were more than ten thousand boats on the Danube at Budapest every Sunday !

The capital, indeed, seems to be concentrating on sport these days—golf links on green Mt. Svábhegy ; polo-grounds and tennis courts on S. Margaret's Island ; open and covered swimming baths, gymnasia, and ball game arenas on all sides.

I felt that where this spirit survived a nation need have no fear of its future.

British sympathy with Hungary is well-founded, for though the Hungarians fought with the Central Powers during the war they had no share in the Vienna decision. Indeed, Count Tisza, Premier of Hungary in 1914, categorically disclaimed any responsibility for war, and advised Franz-Josef to proceed to diplomatic negotiations with Serbia after the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was shot. Count Tisza's attitude was unanimously approved by the Hungarian Cabinet on July 9, 1914. But Hungary was compelled to stand by her alliance with Austria.

The Treaty of Trianon removed twelve and a half million Hungarian subjects from Budapest control, and of these about three-and-a-half millions were undoubtedly Magyar by race and language. The treaty disregarded the fact that Hungary was a constitutionally independent state, the Allied leaders concentrating their attention on the fact that Vienna influence proved paramount in 1914.

These decisions and the economic dislocation which succeeded them, created serious Central European problems, which remain unsolved. Nazi Germany alone has offered a solution to Budapest—that is to say the opportunity of joining the new German Middle-European economic-political bloc. The offer has been well received, and Hungary has drawn steadily away from London towards Berlin during the past two years. But German leadership in Austria and Hungary, together with economic control of the long Danube, means military-strategic control.

Britain, committed to a semi-guarantee of Austrian independence, is by no means willing to mobilise soldiers for the sake of either Austria or Hungary. Nevertheless, the reduction of these two states to provinces of the German Reich would inevitably lead to a new European war. Hungarian leaders believe that this problem could have been solved easily enough had the British Foreign Office taken a *moral and diplomatic initiative* after 1933. As it was, nothing was done and German intervention was disregarded. The disregard of the Foreign

Office was treated as indicating impotence in Central Europe, and Nazi power waxed as that of Britain waned.

Hungary, solidly pro-British, is now the target of Berlin propaganda, costing millions of marks, dumped in every city, and already the subject of debates in the Budapest Parliament. Democracy is violently attacked and the weakness of Britain continually stressed.

Yet Hungary has always looked to Britain for guidance since Kossuth asked for help in 1849. Indeed, the throne of S. Stephen was once offered to England, and a famous Hungarian writer said this year that Hungary would enter without one hour's hesitation into the British Commonwealth of Nations if the Empire would admit her on the same footing as the Dominions !

But from the post-war Cabinets of Britain there has been no single sign of the moral and diplomatic initiative that Hungary and Austria have looked for so long. Lloyd George's difficulties with geography were well-known, and he has even been accused of confusing Transylvania with Pennsylvania by one Hungarian—though this sounds a little too much ! Lord Curzon had no knowledge of the psychology of the new national movements in Eastern Europe. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as Foreign Minister met every problem with his usual involved platitudes and Mr. Eden concentrated his attention on hiding the real implications of the Abyssinian War from the public, knowing well that once these were fully appreciated his departure must perforce be as hurried and undignified as that of his predecessor, Sir Samuel Hoare.

Control of the Danube valley by the dictators can only be blocked by British initiative—no other would be acceptable. The present "moral guarantee" of Austrian independence would mean an automatic state of war in the event of the German invasion, which would doubtless be timed to coincide with troubles in distant parts of the Empire. Such a guarantee is only another diplomatic counter in the hands of the Berlin

and Rome leaders. It must be withdrawn, to be replaced on the same day by an economic and political agreement with the small Eastern and Central European powers, bringing them within the orbit of the British Empire so far as protection, economic and political leadership are concerned. Hungarian business men would be the first to welcome the change, knowing well that Germany, exhausting her resources on arms and propaganda, cannot promote the prosperity of the Danube valley over any long period. Guarantees of independence would be unnecessary, as this new initiative or the mere promise of it would effectually check German and Italian expansionist dreams and would give Central and Eastern Europe the stability that has been unattainable since the war. Frontier rectification questions could, if necessary, be settled by a special commission of investigation which would have power to order plebiscites, under international auspices, on the line of that operated so successfully in the Saar. Such a commission would operate under the authority of the League of Nations, or, if this is finally discredited, by the British League (Commonwealth) of Nations, at the moment the only successful system of international law and progress.

This policy would maintain our centuries-old balance of power foreign policy in Europe, which has always proved successful and has defeated every attempt at European dictatorship by Spain, France, and Germany. It would give us the allies we need in Lower Europe. It would check a return to the French imperialist aggression of the post-1918 period. It would defeat Nazi *Mittel-Europa* plans and the Fascist scheme to dominate the Danube. At the same time we should be rid of a perilous independence "guarantee consultation"—these are indeed only useless parchments, as Belgium found in 1914 and Abyssinia in 1935.

Perhaps most important of all, the removal of war fears would give the little countries a chance to concentrate on the social and economic improvement of

their working men and women instead of preparing them for armed struggle.

On leaving Hungary, after an hour's run from Budapest my train was delayed at Kiskilunchaza, and passengers climbed out to badger the driver. Sitting on the footboard talking with the multi-lingual guard, I heard a harder note creep into the joking voices. No doubt they would soon be talking about Hungary *irredenta*. And so it proved. The inhabitants of Kiskilunchaza gathered round, and soon the engine was the scene of a stormy meeting. The driver had the advantage of a rostrum and a sonorous voice, but Serbs and Roumanians reinforced the impudent Bulgarian commercial traveller who had started the trouble.

Passengers in a train opposite shouted comments, and after a few minutes all that was left of the Treaty of Trianon was a few shreds of parchment. Eventually an officer in a green uniform, trailing a long sword, came along to disperse the meeting, and we pulled out.

But even as we gathered speed young Kiskilunchazans ran along by the rails shouting out new arguments !

CHAPTER NINE

YUGOSLAVIA AND MONTENEGRO

OUTSIDE MY HOTEL—THE SOLUN—IN BELGRADE, A gypsy orchestra played until three and four o'clock in the morning.

Ministers asked me why I had chosen such a place instead of the big Petrograd Hotel. But the young multi-uniformed army officers and junior politicians who came at eleven to see and hear the gypsies were the people I was most interested in.

I knew I should get no valuable information from the political chiefs. And so it proved. In the Ministries I was told that Yugoslavia was now completely pacified, and all discords were either dead or dying. This is a stock answer given to all visitors, and was certainly not borne out by my experience in Croatia.

The trouble is that the unwieldy kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is entirely dominated by Belgrade, the Serbian military headquarters. Few concessions have been made to racial minorities, and although assassination is no longer common, there is a good deal of bad blood between parties and peoples.

Only a few weeks before shots had been fired in the Parliament during a session.

The Croats, whose leader, Raditch, was shot in the Skuptshina, were under Austrian rule until 1918, and attained a much higher level of cultural and economic development than the Serbs. Their impatience at the roughshod methods of Belgrade is easy to understand.

Economically, the country is progressing, but there is

a good deal of unevenness about the developments, and strange contrasts are found. A whole world seems to divide the befezzed shopkeepers of Serajevo, inviting prospective customers to drink Turkish coffee, from the alert, store-suited business men of Dalmatia, although both pay taxes to Belgrade.

In northern Yugoslavia, or Old Serbia, I found that road and factory building is going steadily ahead. Strenuous efforts are being made to attract foreign capital and much is hoped for from the new Dalmatian railway.

In Bosnia, oil prospectors have been granted concessions by the Government, which has itself supplied £50,000 worth of boring machinery. So far there has been only one strike, but I heard a number of florid stories of untapped wealth.

In the capital, the white-coated cavalry and artillery commanders, rarely seen without sword and revolver, take an absorbing interest in politics. It is really the Kalemegdan Fortress, which I visited to see something of the new army, that decides policies.

Special plans are being taken to safeguard the lives of national leaders, and I heard concern expressed for Prince Paul, Regent for the boy King Peter. Prince Paul was educated at Oxford, and has ever since had a hatred of escorts and bodyguards.

Both he and Premier Stoyadinovitch are said to be on the death list of the terror groups. The Premier has already been fired on in Belgrade.

The boy King is popular, and there are strong hopes in Serbian society that he will one day marry an English princess. An Englishwoman, Miss Margery Lockett, was, I found, in the royal palace helping his tutor to select suitable educational films with English commentaries.

In the Anglo-Yugoslav club in Belgrade I was introduced to the secretary, M. Simonovic, and found that he had lived for some years on Tyneside. After discussing mutual friends, he told me he would arrange for me to address a meeting of the members.

The porter of this club, a Plymouth man, has a daughter at school in Belgrade—the only English girl in a Yugoslav school. The special fees pressed heavily on him, he told me, and asked if I would apply for an extraordinary grant from the Board of Education. This I have since done.

I found the cost of living low, even in the capital, and in spite of the adverse exchange. There is considerable poverty, and in some main streets there are lines of people on the kerb offering their possessions to passers-by—vases, fountain-pens, trinkets, etc.

Prices in the villages of the south were much lower than I had expected, and were well below those of the west for necessaries.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina I saw veiled Moslem women for the first time. In Mostar, the blue and grey mosqued capital of Herzegovina, on the River Naresta, between Dubrovnik and Serajevo, I saw an amazing jumble of colourful costumes in the broken streets.

The town is redeemed from complete Orientalism by the splendid Roman bridge, which recalls the spacious days of Diocletian, who was a native of the country.

In the crowded streets I jostled with proud-looking Montenegrins, sloe-eyed Greeks, Bosnian women in black trousers and white blouses, carrying rolled umbrellas, and bare-footed Serbian beggars, who leaped out of the way of the "ammunition boots" of the inevitable soldiers.

In Serajevo, where the Great War originated in the murder of the Austrian Crown Prince, I lived in a Mohammedan household, and visited one of the magnificent mosques. The old Turkish town is built on the side of a thickly wooded mountain, and the narrow, tortuous streets wind about at strange angles.

Tapestry and carpet factories bring something of a modern atmosphere, but centuries of Turkish rule have left an enduring mark.

If Yugoslavia is poor her people are by no means

dejected, and the workers have learned to enjoy simple pleasures.

In the remote villages the inn is the only social centre, and I was always made welcome by my Serbian hosts. As I went towards the Montenegrin border I was in a village that had never before been visited by an Englishman. Memories of the 1915 retreat, in which English doctors and nurses played a fine part, are still vivid and a Britisher has an automatic claim on local hospitality. And amongst the unlettered peasants and small farmers —despised by the ruling militarists of the capital—I found a better understanding of western opinion than in the stormy political meetings I attended in the Belgrade cafés.

Near the Kalemegdan Fortress—once the Turkish citadel—in Belgrade I had a talk with a friend—one of the young artillery officers of the new Yugoslav army. I was the first foreigner who had been inside the fortress on an unofficial visit, he told me, anxious to hear my impressions.

I had entered behind the butcher's handcart, and he appeared to think this a great joke, although he did not explain all its implications.

I was pleased with the general cheerfulness of atmosphere in the barracks, but struck by the apparent slackness of discipline. This slackness is only on the surface, however, and is really due to the absence of class distinctions in the country.

The Serb is an excellent soldier, and I saw a little of his quality at the recent manœuvres, which involved operations on a larger scale than has been seen since the war. Service is compulsory for all men between the ages of 21 and 45, these limits being extended to 18 and 50 on mobilisation. Service is for a ten year period, of which the first eighteen months is spent with the colours, and the remainder on leave, subject to recall for training. At 31 men pass automatically into what is called the "Second Reserve," and at 38 into the "Third Reserve." The official figures for the peace

strength of the army are 8,000 officers and 100,000 other ranks, but these figures have been greatly increased by recent reorganisation schemes. Mobilisation strength would be at least one million men.

In no other Balkan state does the army play such an important part in public affairs as in Yugoslavia. This is a legacy of the war years, when all southern Slavs looked to King Alexander and his Serbian army as the rallying point for their aspirations.

King Alexander and his advisers followed the traditional Serbian policy of building up a force strong enough to be a predominant factor in Balkan affairs, and this policy was supported by the French Government and strengthened by French credits.

General Peter Zhivkovitch was able to guide Cabinet policy in the required direction through his close friendship with the King, and his leadership of the White Hand secret society. Radical politicians who spoke in the Skuptshina (Parliament) against the military estimates were "dealt with," and within a few years the new army machine was working smoothly.

Zhivkovitch's policy has been so successful that to-day no less than a third of the entire annual budget goes on military expenditure. For technical and administrative purposes adduced by the General, the War Ministry in Belgrade was also given the right to organise a special Naval Department, so that the fighting services were brought under a single command.

The death of King Alexander removed the strongest prop in the Cabinet from the General, however, and last March he was dismissed from his post as War Minister by Premier Stoyadinovitch. Zhivkovitch is immensely popular with the army, however, and his political influence may again make itself felt.

One of his principal difficulties was the creation of an officer class, or a reservoir of educated young men from which he could draw suitable cadets. He had hoped for something along the lines of the Officers' Training Corps of Britain, but this was barred by the

paucity of universities and technical colleges. And there was no " officer class " in a country largely owned by hundreds of thousands of peasant proprietors. So he had to content himself with the reorganisation of the Military Academy at Belgrade. Here I found that cadets from the three universities of Zagreb, Belgrade, and Lyublyana are trained for all arms. Then suitable youths from all parts of the country, recommended by the government officials, are sent to the Academy for probationary periods. A close watch for talented men in the ranks is also maintained. A superior course at the Academy provides training for staff officers and commanders.

The training is of an exceedingly practical nature, although weakness in tank strength and the obsolete pattern of many of the guns are handicaps.

An unusual feature of army life in Yugoslavia is the participation of so many serving officers in political discussions. Many of them are members of the White Hand society which had official protection until 1935. At meetings which are reported in the Press it is nothing uncommon for speeches to be made by officers on the active list on the subject of Yugoslav expansion. This cannot be wondered at, for *The Soldier's Manual*—an official book issued to all garrisons—has a section devoted to this subject. In this Yugoslavia claims Italian Istria, southern Slovenia, northern Carinthia from Austria, Saranya from Hungary, the eastern Banat from Roumania, Vidina from Bulgaria, and Scutari from Albania. It is recalled that Scutari was occupied by Serbian troops after the Armistice, the invading force only withdrawing behind the frontier after a threat of action by the League of Nations. That such a book as this can be circulated with official approval gives an illuminating glimpse of some of the forces at work behind the scenes in the Ministry of Defence, now controlled by General Maritch.

At the moment anti-Italian feeling is strong in the country—it has been present in varying strength ever

since the seizure of Fiume—and, rightly or wrongly, Italian agents are blamed for stirring up fresh trouble in Macedonia. A close liaison is being established between the Berlin and Belgrade War Ministries, and there have been several official exchanges of visits by high officers. It is known that the German staff officers were much impressed by the Yugoslav army manœuvres. These certainly showed that King Alexander's plan for creating an efficient national army had been achieved.

If Yugoslavia is a good country for soldiers, civil servants have never found life a bed of roses, and in recent years their trials have multiplied owing to the growth of political terrorism. In Belgrade I had a good opportunity of learning the grievances of officials in the Ministerial offices. Salaries are low (the Heads of some Departments receiving less than £250 a year) and hours long (ten to seven is the normal working day); but these matters are not the chief worries of the officials. What is disturbing them most is the new promotion system introduced by Premier Stoyadinovitch and his colleagues.

Stoyadinovitch and his Ministers were filling every post of importance with their friends, relatives and followers. Men with long records of service are being compulsorily retired or dismissed, and dozens of permanent officials are finding that "permanence" is, after all, only a word.

Some of the new men who have been pitchforked into responsible positions are aggressive-mannered professional politicians with no taste for work, and the atmosphere in many of the Ministries is distinctly strained.

One official told me that it was impossible to approach the Government, as a deputation would be suspected of White Hand tendencies and the members would almost certainly lose their positions. A petition to the Regent, Prince Paul, is being drawn up, but the task of collecting signatures is no easy one.

M. Zivtitch, head of the Foreign Ministry Press

Bureau, who bears an astonishing resemblance to Charles Laughton, gave me a number of introductions to other Ministries. I was severely cross-examined by a group of officers guarding the entrance of the Ministry of War, before being admitted. In the War Ministry new officials were being shown their duties. I discovered that a large number of White Russians were employed in various capacities, their knowledge of languages and military experience having stood them in good stead. I learnt that most of them had not yet taken Yugoslav nationality, still having aspirations of a triumphal return to Moscow.

Higher officials in the provinces enjoy many privileges ; but they are often subject to local pressure, and this may take a drastic form. When Belgrade officials were first sent to Macedonia, for example, the Imro society (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) warned them to return, pleading ill-health. On their refusal, no less than ten shootings took place within a month, and soldiers were sent to guard official buildings. But as soon as the soldiers were withdrawn the Imro marksmen were at work again, and some of the officials left Macedonia without waiting for a doctor's certificate. To-day most of the officials are Macedonians ; and, in any case, Imro has been driven underground—for a time.

Looking out of the latticed window of my Serajevo lodging I watched Bosnian women kissing the hands of male friends they met in the cobbled, winding street. The action was symbolical of the position of women throughout southern Yugoslavia.

In the little towns of square, yellow houses, topped by green mosques, Western ideas are making very slow progress, and I found Bosnia and Herzegovina far more Moslem than Turkey.

Living among the peasants in the straggling villages that line the main route to Montenegro I was struck by the general acceptance of the idea that all unpleasant and burdensome tasks should be performed by the

womenfolk. And such tasks—up at dawn to begin a strenuous round that never finished until long after nightfall.

Yet they looked healthy enough, most of them, with their faces burned red-brown by constant exposure to sun and air. When I commented on their good health to an old woman in Podgorica she told me that they never had time to be ill.

Many of the Moslem women still go veiled, but there is no severe condemnation of those who neglect the custom. Many Bosnian women go shopping unveiled, in white blouses, black baggy trousers, and pointed shoes, carrying rolled umbrellas.

Rouge and lipstick are frowned upon by the all-powerful elders on the village councils, but other cosmetics are allowed.

In Montenegro, the little mountain state which maintained its independence for so long against the Turk, I stayed among the workers in the tiny white cottages they have built from the abundant limestone.

So barren is the country that every little strip of land that may possibly produce a crop is utilised. Some of these little strips are no bigger than a tennis court, and on narrow paths which spiralled up hillsides I met women carrying loads of soil to their holdings. Sometimes a family will own half a dozen little plots so far apart that the work must be shared out among the young and old.

I was particularly impressed by the fine physique and dignity of the rugged mountaineers, who live an extraordinarily hard life on these barren uplands. In embroidered waistcoats, red and gold velvet caps, baggy breeches and leggings, they toiled up the narrow mountain path towards Cetinje, the old capital. Cetinje's quaint streets of limestone cottages are spread out along the summit of the Black Mountain, and one can see the whole country like a relief map from its highest spur.

A tax inspector told me that he was quite happy in

the little mountain country but for one thing—his house was chimneyless, and he could not work in smoke and fumes. Most Montenegrin houses are without chimneys, the smoke escaping through cracks in the walls and roof; and I sympathised with the tax inspector when I went to a farmhouse party and was given the seat of honour—before the fire !

Glasses of *raki*, the local spirit, and tiny cups of syrupy coffee circulated at an amazing speed, borne on trays carried by the farmer's wife and daughter.

I had been warned not to rise when they entered the house, as this is considered a breach of mountain etiquette ! And it was not until all males had finished dinner that they were allowed to snatch a hurried meal.

Life is indeed hard for these women of the uplands. Electric light and running water seem remote dreams to them, and as for baths—— !

Radio, newspapers, and films are unknown in the villages. But the people are always eager to hear about the magic labour-saving devices of the West. When the farmer's wife needed kerosene for her lamp she had to tramp six miles to the market town with a heavy jar and six miles back, in all kinds of weather. And on the bare hills there was no shelter from the pitiless rain and wind.

CHAPTER TEN

BULGARIA AND MACEDONIA

ONE COLD GREY MORNING, SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN, I succeeded in crossing the Yugoslav frontier into Bulgaria, after long delays and examinations of papers. Before me stretched miles of grey rock—the Stara Planina or Balkan Mountains. Vast caves dotted the slope on my left, and spirals of white mist rose from the valleys. The atmosphere soon cleared. Sunrise showed a splendid vista of brown valleys and grey peaks. A few trees appeared here and there on the hills, but vegetation was sparse, being mostly scrub and brush.

A narrow winding road led through the mountain range, and I followed it towards a village. On the crest of a hill I met two peasants—high cheekboned, black-haired, with broad faces, their noses flat at the top. They are a healthy looking people. They wore black fur caps similar to those seen in Albania and Macedonia, baggy trousers tucked into leggings, and the usual embroidered waistcoats. They were curious at my appearing " out of the blue," but satisfied themselves with stares and a waved greeting. Half a mile farther on I passed a fair-haired, blue-eyed woman driving an unwilling cow.

In the village I found French and German useless and was driven back on my less than scanty Russian to order breakfast—coffee and a piece of black bread.

The houses of the better-class tenant farmers are built of stone, and are comfortable by Balkan standards. But many of the workers live in poor cottages, which are

built by marking off the rooms with poles, the spaces between being filled with osier wattles, plastered with cow-dung mixed with straw and clay. When this mixture is dry the walls are white-washed and a tiled roof added. Most cottages have three rooms—the common living-room, the common bedroom, and the larder. The floor, of hard-baked earth, is covered with matting. Furniture is simple, consisting of a table and a few chairs. Often I found only big cushions, which serve as chairs during the day and as a bed at night. I was to spend the night in such a cottage twenty miles farther east, where I was given hospitality for a few pence. The leading men of the village gathered to meet the stranger from the west, and I was astonished at the extent and accuracy of their knowledge. Those of them who went to market towns remembered every bit of gossip or news they heard there. The absence of books and newspapers and ink has certainly preserved the memory to an amazing extent.

I admired the hardiness and outspokenness of the villagers, and was permitted to handle their weapons—most of them relics of the war. Well-oiled, their butt-plates highly polished, the rifles looked as businesslike as their owners. Some of the older peasants seemed rather suspicious of strangers at first, but once they thawed they soon became pleasant hosts. Their first reaction to a newcomer is "What does he want from us?" The villages are very self-centred and conservative, and I do not think the elder folk would take kindly to any outside interference with their customs.

Religious faith is strong. On the walls of my cottage were faded engravings bought years before from the monks of Mt. Athos, and in a corner was a picture of S. George, behind an oil lamp.

One of the richer farmers told me that Government agricultural stations are carrying on a big campaign of crop improvement—concentrating grain production in the most suitable areas, and providing improved varieties of seed. "Bulgaria has been a big farm.

But big gardens pay better to-day," he added, explaining the methods by which the transition to vegetable and fruit production is being effected. From the evidence I collected it was clear that the Bulgarian Government was thoroughly alive to the need for winning markets for the new crops, and I heard frequent mention of new grading and inspection systems. Living among the poorer workers in the mountain villages, I was often restricted to a diet of bread, *sauerkraut*, maize porridge, heavily seasoned bean dishes, greasy soups, and a big cake called *banitza*. Some of the Bulgarian dishes would not have appealed to everyone, but a strenuous day in the open air was a good preparation for them.

Most of the workers were big, husky, and brown-faced, obviously in excellent condition. I was struck by the great age of some of them. A man or woman of eighty is not considered very old in Bulgaria, and centenarians are common. I heard of one married couple at Plaven who have been married 82 years and —so they say—have not yet had a quarrel. I asked some of the oldest people what their recipe was and generally got the reply: "Onions." Bulgarians eat enormous quantities of onions, cooked in all kinds of ways. But sometimes sour milk or the local wine got the credit. These old people were certainly splendid advertisements for the plain diet and hard work system they recommended. Their minds were slow moving but logical, and once their decisions were taken it was not easy to budge them.

On one of the frequent festival days a young lamb was killed, and a bottle of home-brewed wine opened. This feast was also a family reunion, and I learned more of the hard life led by most of the mountain folk.

The women wore high-necked dresses of unbleached linen or cotton, elaborately embroidered. Usually they put working dresses over these, with a rough apron on top. Round their waists they wound sashes of

coloured worsted. During the winter the women carry on their spinning and weaving, besides helping their menfolk on the land. They make nearly all their own clothes, and some sell fancy waistcoats and shawls to the market dealers. In the spring and summer they go out in the fields as soon as their household work is finished. Even the old women are always busy, and in Slivnitza I watched one of them, long past field work, looking after the smaller children of my hostess, while her knitting needles clicked and she kept an eye on the copper cookpot.

But it would be wrong to think that Bulgarian women find life dull. There is always a lot to do in a peasant home, and watching their busy fingers and happy faces I felt that their jaded and sophisticated sisters of the West might learn a great deal from them. Cinemas, dance halls and regular newspapers are absent, but the workers find simpler ways of amusing themselves in their scanty leisure. Then they laugh much more readily than town dwellers, whose nerves are strained in all kinds of ways.

After completing my business in the capital, I set off for Mount Vitosha. The black, deserted road, leading to the foothills of the snow-capped mountain, looked grim and forbidding, but the journey was interesting enough. I broke the ascent at Dragolevtzi, where I found a group of skiers enjoying the wonderful air and view.

On the east side of the mountain I had an opportunity of seeing a Bulgarian wedding. The bride's house had been limewashed and her trousseau hung on a line for the inspection of the women visitors. In a brilliantly-coloured dress, decorated with medals and coins, she looked very young and rather frightened. The groom was a flamboyantly-dressed, scowling young man who was irritated by the continual goading and chaff of the guests, who were clearly out to enjoy themselves thoroughly. The ceremony was performed in the little village church by the bearded, tall-hatted, black-robed

" Pop " or priest of the Orthodox Church. The priest knew everybody and had no easy job to keep his young friends quiet.

On leaving the church corn was pelted at the pair, who walked through the street to the house of the bride's mother, which was soon crowded. The bride rushed round the living room, kissing her women attendants, each of whom gave her some dried fruit. Then a lengthy meal was served, for which several sheep and pigs had been killed. All kinds of dainties were produced, including sweet cheeses, Turkish delight, and sugared fruits. After the table had been cleared, the furniture was shifted so that the dancing could begin. The dancing, which was preceded by some folk songs, was different from anything I had ever seen, and there was a freshness and lack of uniformity about the steps that added to the fun. Soon everyone was hilariously happy. Fruit sherbets, potent home-brewed wine, and little cakes were continually passed round. A few of the older men played cards and drank some brown-coloured liquid that I was unable to identify. After a few hours a bear dance was called for, and a man dressed in a bearskin was dragged into the room by his " keeper " and made to perform tricks. We all joined hands and danced round the bear, and a strenuous night closed with a chase of the bear and a triumphal march to the bride's home.

Further east I found that conditions in the villages were on the up-grade. I saw many brick houses and wooden floors. Several villages boasted electric light, although most have still to depend on the oil lamp. Articles of furniture such as chests of drawers and wash-stands—rare in old Bulgaria—were also quite common in the better cottages.

Borrowing an old car from a farmer, I drove along the winding road to the Rila Monastery, and hired a horse to go up into the mountains. Sombre forests, jagged rocks, and silent pools made up a picture of wild beauty reminiscent of the Scottish highlands. Returning

to the heights overlooking the monastery, I noticed how it resembled a fortress. The huge building stood amid gloomy forests on a heavily wooded hill, above a rushing stream.

Back in Kotcherinovo, one of the tobacco-growing villages, I took the road that led north. On to Karlovo, along a road jammed with animals—horses, water-buffaloes, mules, oxen, and goats. Karlovo is the chief town of the famous Rose Valley. Here are tens of thousands of acres of roses, and round about are the distilleries, which make rose oil for Paris perfumers. It was unfortunately not the rose season when I was there, but I can imagine the unique beauty of this valley in the summer. As I went on, the traffic thinned out and the road mounted steeply. Beyond the hills was Varna—the gateway to Russia and the East.

I had heard a great deal about the political influence of the military leagues in Bulgaria, and arrived in Sofia to find myself in the thick of another attempt at violent revolution. Colonel Veltcheff, who had been the real power behind the Government of Officers in 1934, had crossed the Yugoslav frontier with a band of supporters, intending to seize the King, as he had done before. A meeting of twenty-five ex-members of the *Sobranje* (Parliament) was raided by the police, however, and from the papers found on the arrested men the details of the plot were discovered. Veltcheff was arrested, together with most of his men, when he crossed the frontier at Slivnitza.

Entering the city by the Maria Louisa Avenue, I found myself in a stream of buffalo carts, cattle, and heavily-laden peasants, enveloped in swirling clouds of white dust. Cavalry patrols clattered by, for the city was under martial law and all public buildings were guarded by soldiers ; while higher officers were speeding in cars to the Palace to assure King Boris of their loyalty to the regime. I was compelled to postpone my interviews with the Bulgarian leaders until order was restored, and had an excellent opportunity of discovering the

truth about the officers' political alliances, which were very much in the limelight.

At the military courts which were set up by General Lukoff, the War Minister, severe sentences were meted out, and Veltcheff was condemned to death. Commandant Kiril Stantcheff, his chief adviser, also received a death sentence, and eleven officers suspected of complicity were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Fourteen other officers were acquitted. Those most intimate with the political leaders were confident that Veltcheff would be reprieved by the King, for a large section of the army had been associated with his organisation before he was driven from power. In the Sofia cafés young officers talked openly of a signed petition to the King, and made it clear that pressure would be brought to bear on the Ministers. This proved effective, for a reprieve was granted.

Practically every officer in the Sofia garrison, I was told, was a member of one or the other of the party clubs. The most notorious of these, the *Zveno*, has been proscribed on several occasions; but the politicians, at the head of small parties, are powerless against the military groups.

The Treaty of Neuilly created a Prætorian Guard in Bulgaria when it limited the maximum strength of the army to 20,000 men, who must be enrolled by voluntary enlistment. All officers must engage for a minimum period of twenty years' service, and the good pay offered attracted the best type of young man. The political leagues arose immediately after the Armistice, when efforts were made to conceal arms and equipment from the representatives of the Allies. After the new army was created these groups continued to function, gradually turning their attention to home politics.

Had there ever been a strong and stable Government in the country it is probable that the power of the leagues would have been broken, but the continual turmoil and attempts at a *coup d'état* by the Communists gave the chiefs of the Sofia garrison a tremendous influence in the Cabinet.

Soon after Colonel Veltcheff had been arrested I saw King Boris review an infantry battalion and a cavalry regiment in the square adjoining his Palace, which was formerly the headquarters of the Turkish Bey who governed the country for the Sultan. Considerable enthusiasm was shown, but a White Russian civil service official—one of many in Sofia—was cynical. "They like Boris," he said, "but they cannot stand his politicians." Veltcheff, he thought, might have succeeded, but had antagonised the army by his actions in 1934, when he democratised the constitution and refused to fill all Cabinet positions from the army, as he had promised. He had been overthrown by another military clique.

I studied the men on parade with interest, and was impressed by their smartness, by their workmanlike appearance, and by the excellence of the horses of the cavalry. The Bulgarian has been described as "the Scotsman of the Balkans," and as I watched the sturdy, brown-faced men march past the saluting base this struck me as apt. Bulgaria has always been a military nation, and since the voluntary and selective system has been introduced military service has become a much-sought-after *cachet* among the workers.

At the Sofia review, commemorating the fifty-eighth anniversary of Bulgarian liberation from the Turks, General Lukoff read a decree dissolving the officers' league and ordering the burning of all league documents. "It is not a soldier's duty to mix in politics," he said in a speech (to the assembled garrison) which was coldly received. This decree will in all probability have as little effect as similar decrees have had in the past, as the leagues are quickly reconstructed under new names. Politics, indeed, have become an accepted branch of military activity in the country, and the officers' groups are paralleled by barrack-room associations of the men in the ranks, who follow the fortunes of the officers hailing from their home districts.

Generally speaking, relations between officers and

men appear to be excellent, and this is no doubt a consequence of the strong democratic spirit of the Bulgarian villages, which was recognised in the reorganisation of the army.

Eighty per cent of the Bulgarian people live in small villages, and it is always understood that every man has the right of immediate access to his superiors, no matter how exalted their position may be, if he has any grievance. One of the reasons for King Boris's continued hold upon popular affection is his acceptance of this practice on his tours, and his liking for working on trains and automobiles as a mechanic. Bulgarian soldiers have similar rights, which are only slightly curtailed by the necessities of discipline.

I found the officers' groups united in their demands for a bigger army and the tearing up of the Treaty of Neuilly. No doubt these developments will not be long delayed, and there is significant increase in the military budget approved by the new Premier.

Unlike Yugoslavia, there is little anti-Italian feeling in the army. The King married an Italian Princess, and this no doubt affected opinion, but I think that the flouting of the Treaty would in any case gain him numerous admirers in this army of politicians.

In the Macedonian mountains, Imro, as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation is called, is being recognised. Imro has been variously described by travellers as a gang of ruffians ; a legion of deserters and adventurers ; and a society similar to the old Italian Mafia. Actually Imro was, until recently, a political party which had the support of the majority of Macedonians. The party was organised on a military basis, and administered the greater part of old Macedonia, collecting taxes and imposing its own laws—although technically Macedonia is parcelled out between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece ! This peculiar state of affairs was made possible by the " murder squads " of the *comitadjis*, which shot down any official who did not show a proper respect for Imro.

Such a dual administration could not, of course, survive; and after King Alexander was killed by Chernozemsky, an Imro member, at Marseilles, the *comitadji* strongholds were invaded by soldiers, and Michailoff and other leaders driven into hiding in Anatolia.

But in Gorna-Djumaya, the old Turkish town which is the capital of Bulgarian Macedonia, I heard of the preparations being made to remobilise the cells of members in every Macedonian town. Several tales were recounted of Michailoff's wife, Karnitcheva, who accompanies him everywhere. The *voyvodas* (group leaders) often take their wives with them on riding expeditions, and some of these women are expert riders and good shots. Karnitcheva has herself been convicted of murder, and has the Imro habit of always carrying arms.

The atmosphere of these frontier districts is so unlike that of the west that it is not surprising to find misunderstandings and blunderings at international conferences held to compose differences. The Imro supporters I met were fanatical believers in the cause of Macedonian independence. They looked on the officials and soldiers sent from Belgrade, Athens and Sofia as enemies and foreigners, and considered ambush and murder as perfectly legitimate weapons.

At the frontier itself I found a ten-feet high fence of electrified barbed wire. This wire, which is studded with concrete machine-gun "pill-boxes," runs the whole length of the frontier—over 300 miles—and is supported by man-traps, ditches and patrols!

Every Imro member must swear a solemn oath to devote himself to the cause of winning freedom for his country, and traitors are given short shrift. The Society never pressed heavily on the peasants or farmers—unless they were opponents—and levies were light, so that there is no feeling of antagonism in the country itself. The locally born police are sympathetic, which explains some of the surprising outspokenness of Imro

men in public places. The young Macedonians regard membership of the Society as an honour ; and judging from the rumours pervading Skopje and Razlog, the stage is set for a resurrection of the " bands."

The ex-*comitadjis* are not ordinary politicians. Ardent patriots, they have long been inured to a technique of violence which recalls mediæval Italy. Few of them would speak of their experiences in the cafés of dusty Skopje (as Uskub is now called), but within their homes they were vehement.

To-day most of the officials are Macedonians, and in any case, Imro has been driven underground—for a time—by the stern Bulgarian military measures.

Imro agents are continually seeking funds abroad, and they have been employed by various governments, as everyone in the Balkans knows. Italian imperialism seeks new opportunities in the treaty-bred Balkan divisions, and Imro is not likely to die so long as its presence is a potential threat to three different governments !

Imro and White Hand terrorism survives chiefly because it rarely encroaches on the lives of the masses. A terrible apathy has seized many of the workers, and there is a feeling in some districts that what happens to a government does not concern the people.

Thus the general desire for peace and economic progress that I found everywhere among the peasants is subordinated to the desires of ambitious politicians and soldiers. But one day the peasant cultivator, in spite of his remoteness from town, newspaper, and platform, will begin to ask some awkward questions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ALBANIA

IN THE LITTLE FISHING BOAT THAT TOOK ME ACROSS Lake Scutari was a young Albanian in white jacket and baggy trousers, a dirty fez perched on his head at an acute angle.

He regarded me curiously, and at length started a stream of questions, although my Albanian was limited to a few words and his Italian seemed little better. Considering the difficulties, we made surprising progress.

I gathered that he considered England a marvellous country.

When he told me what he earned it was easy to understand why his thoughts were roving abroad.

Wages are low everywhere in Albania and even King Zog's Ministers in Tirana get salaries which sound absurdly low to Western ears. But I found that the smallness of their salaries did not save them from criticism.

I thought of all I had ever heard about Albania. I recalled the offer of the crown to various Englishmen before Ahmed Zogu's seizure of power, and the Press stories of applications for the throne from distinguished British army and naval officers and—best of all—the application of a lady teacher of classical dancing! Odd articles in the magazines had portrayed the new State as the most Ruritanian of the Balkan kingdoms, with savage armed clansmen in the mountain villages, bandits in the passes, and warring factions in the towns.

In Scutari, which was for long the seat of Turkish

government, and is a typically Turkish town, I found language and money difficulties much less than I had expected. In the main streets were money-changers with little piles of coins before them on wooden trays. It is a penal offence to take gold out of Albania, and I saw English sovereigns next to the gold napoleons that are minted in Rome for the Tirana Government. All kinds of money were accepted in the shops, while language troubles are eased by the fact that many Albanians have lived abroad or served in foreign armies.

Outside Scutari I saw a police post, where the clansmen leave their weapons before entering the town, but found that this was one of the practices which have misled the casual observer in the past. Actually King Zog's aim to disarm the population has been largely achieved, and the reason that the mountaineers and northern tribes are not interfered with is the necessity for a frontier force to guard against possible attacks from Yugoslavia.

In the mountain villages of the north I was well received by the *malissori* chiefs, who preserve many of their old customs. The blood feud is dying out, and will no doubt vanish with the coming of good roads and efficient local administration. The hospitality rule survives, full protection and care for a stranger being held a sacred duty, once decided on. I formed a high opinion of the hawk-faced mountaineers, whose main purpose in life is the maintenance of unblemished honour. Women are not held in much esteem, and live in what feminists would call a state of subjection.

The mountaineers had no high opinion of the Italians, who occupied the country during the war, and I heard descriptions of how their garrison had been driven from Valona by the national irregulars. Englishmen are very popular, as the British organisation of the gendarmerie, the main buttress of King Zog, has gained the admiration of the people, while the work for Albania of such men as Colonel Herbert, Sir Harry Eyres, and Colonel Stirling will be long remembered.

Banditry has been practically suppressed, although it is occasionally necessary to telephone the next gendarmerie post when setting out on a night journey the remoter districts.

Farther south on the road to Alessio I found the same dislike of the Italians that had characterised the Scutari business folk and the *malissori*. Indeed, this feeling is stronger than ever. The general attitude of the educated class is that there is something to be gained from Italy, but all attempts to interfere with independence must be resisted.

Everywhere except in the mountains I heard demands for economic development. Certainly there is great mineral wealth in the Accursed Mountains, and the country itself is fertile enough. Absence of good roads is the chief drawback. But the beginnings of daily bus services are visible, and a German company is now investigating transport possibilities.

Albanians are perhaps unique among the Balkan peoples in possessing a general spirit of tolerance. There is no bad blood between Catholics and Moslems, and at national demonstrations leaders of both religions have appeared on the platform together.

Yugoslav and Greek propaganda in Albania appears to have ceased for the time being, and there have been no incidents on the Montenegrin frontier during the last few months.

In the north it seemed a long-established custom to attack everyone in Tirana save the King, who has, somehow, retained his prestige. The old mountaineers are proud and fierce, and affect to look down on the Albanians of the south, who take much more kindly to trade and are trying to develop new industries.

But the younger men, even in the north, are dissatisfied with the old life and would welcome Westernisation.

The land is fertile, but agricultural methods are primitive. Poor people travel by carts from town to town, and the roads are often so bad that a 100-mile trip may take the best part of a week.

Business people take buses, but there is often only one bus a day between important places. With the bad roads and the many mountain passes, bus sickness is quite a common complaint, and there is always great competition for the seat next to the driver, which is to be preferred for many reasons, not the least of which is the hot, garlic-laden atmosphere of the packed interior.

In Scutari I was invited to drink syrup-like Turkish coffee from tiny cups in a rose garden by a local merchant, a Moslem. This coffee-drinking, which is something in the nature of a rite, was the preliminary to his disclosing his views, and those of his associates, on the attempts of the Italians to establish something like a protectorate over the kingdom.

Albanians, said my friend, could not admire the Italians, whose Imperialist schemes were too obvious. In Scutari there had been recent demonstrations outside the Italian Consulate.

I was to hear several similar opinions from merchants in other towns, and it is true that no Albanian seems to have much regard for the Italians, although my impression was that there was no immediate danger of an anti-Italian movement emerging. King Zog's influence would prevent this in any case.

In Albanian towns only working-class girls walk about the streets unaccompanied, and I was amused at the way in which a shopkeeper spoke of his regret that his daughter should wish to visit the cinema in Tirana. The older mountaineers would never have dreamed of allowing their daughters to go to a cinema, which they seemed to think was demoralising.

In the Accursed Mountains I heard that certain families had sworn vendettas against King Zog's Ministers, and even in the tiny royal palace—the smallest in Europe—I was told that the King's mother did all the cooking for her son in case of " accidents."

King Zog himself maintains little pomp and ceremony, and, indeed, this would be frowned on by the independent-spirited Albanians. The humblest peasant, dressed

in tatters, speaks to superiors with a boldness that always surprises newcomers.

In other ways Albanian manners are rather unusual. Anyone not dressed in the usual Albanian "shoddy" who stands looking at a shop display, is liable to be asked inside for refreshment. The conversation that follows rarely deals at first with the shopkeeper's goods, which he mentions afterwards as if a passing thought had struck him!

Among the kilted highlanders of the northern mountains I was surprised to find an old grey-bearded warrior who had been in the United States in his youth, and spoke fair English. Thousands of his countrymen had emigrated before the war, he told me, and a considerable number had returned. Most of them lived in the big towns, such as Durazzo and Tirana.

The old man was immensely proud of his race, and when I showed him that I was familiar with the stories of Ali Pasha and Scanderbeg (the national heroes), he was delighted, and I was at once invited to drink some of the local wine, and to eat some roast lamb.

Accepting his hospitality automatically put me under his protection, and he and all his family, according to centuries-old tradition, would protect me with force of arms if I were threatened by bandits.

In this district many workers go armed, but they are expected to ask for permission to carry their weapons from the gendarmerie. The northern Albanians, however, have never taken very kindly to officialdom and tax-gatherers have a singularly difficult job.

Albania supplied court bodyguards for many years to the rulers of Greece and Turkey, and many young men still leave the country to serve in foreign armies. The profession of arms retains universal respect in the mountains, and to speak of wars or weapons is a certain way of arousing interest.

At a village south-east of Lake Scutari I stayed at a little inn. The proprietor had never met anyone from England before, and was very anxious to please.

My visit was treated as an event, and when I went out I was followed by children shouting for alms and also by self-styled " guides." But I shook them off, and, avoiding a police post where I knew I would be asked interminable questions if I were seen, I headed for the shop of a Turkish jeweller, of whom I had been told. Fat, hook-nosed, he bemoaned the break-up of the old empire.

He had the blue eyes that have been remarked in Kemal, the present Turkish dictator, but I knew enough about the Turkish race-consciousness not to ask questions. Actually many of the Turkish leaders are of Greek descent, and in any case there were always thousands of European women in the Turkish harems.

My host gave me the name of an Albanian friend in the next town from whom I would be able to claim hospitality simply by mentioning his name. I found myself thinking regretfully that these courtesies would pass with the coming of new motor roads and railways.

For the face of poverty-stricken Albania is already changing. The petrol can, the cinema poster, and the ready-made " reach-me-down " have already arrived in the towns, and German-built aeroplanes are droning daily over the mountains which in the old days kept the tribesmen free.

Living among the clansmen, I found a much keener interest in international affairs than I had expected. Illiteracy is widespread, but the absence of books and newspapers is hardly noticeable, for the latest news is carried from the markets with amazing accuracy on the tongues of the salesmen. Many men who had never handled a book in their lives had wonderful memories. They could repeat the twenty- and thirty-versed poems about Ali Pasha and Scanderbeg, the national heroes, without a single falter, and phrases from Mussolini's speeches were carried by word of mouth from Durazzo to Scutari.

The military tradition dies hard in this country of blood-feuds and private arsenals, but the memory of the

last war is still vivid, and the clans have no wish for a repetition. My knowledge of Albanian was limited to a few words, but enough Italian and English is spoken to enable the traveller to gauge opinion. There was a feeling that the League could still be made to function efficiently if it had the backing of a strong military force. It was made very clear that the clansmen would be only too glad to send a contingent. One Gheg school teacher in Scutari pointed at two young men, clad in the white *fustanella* (kilt) and embroidered coat of the district. "Our men formed the Palace Guards for the Sultan, and they still go to Athens," he said; "why not to Geneva?"

The young men had little interest in the League, but were very willing to discuss prospects of economic development for their country, which they thought was in danger of becoming an Italian protectorate. Every boat arriving at San Giovanni di Medua, they said, was bringing Italian technicians and business men, and the few *leks* they were paid every week were minted in Rome. Dislike of the Italians is widespread outside Tirana, and the Albanians can never forget that their irregulars defeated an Italian garrison at Valona after the Armistice.

I found a number of Italian technical officers in the towns, for there is a close liaison between Tirana and Rome. Many Albanian officers have passed through the Italian military colleges at Rome and Modena, and Italian engineers and signals officers are frequently "attached" unofficially to Albanian units. There is little similarity, however, in the training methods of the two armies. The emphasis upon mobility and mass gymnastics seen in Italy has no counterpart at Tirana, where the principal objective appears to be the production of an army of marksmen.

Some of the officers of the capital garrison wear extremely Ruritanian uniforms, and their swagger is in no way diminished by the modesty of their quarters. One I saw had a large white busby, bearing the crest

of his regiment, a much-bemedalled white tunic, very baggy black and red riding breeches, and field boots. This uniform was devised, I believe, by Albania's first Foreign Minister, who was driven abroad after the first civil war.

King Zog has declared military service universal and compulsory by decree, but in practice the country lacks resources to maintain a large body of men in training, while the care necessary in selecting drafts from clans mutually opposed slows down the organisational machinery.

A section of armoured cars has just been added to the army, and foreign specialists are being enlisted for instructional courses. These cars should prove very useful to the Government in putting down the sporadic civil disorders. Some idea of the atmosphere of violence that prevailed until recently can be gathered from King Zog's action in the Chamber of Deputies, which is still talked about. While presiding at a meeting he was fired at and wounded in two places. Undaunted, he retained his chair and placed his revolver on the table before him, continuing with the business. The deputies, however, rose in their places with their hands above their heads ! Such an incident sounds incredible to those accustomed to the peaceful ways of Western Chambers, but in Albania there is nothing abnormal in such happenings.

King Zog, who a few years ago was a leader of irregulars with a price on his head, has no active pastimes. Indeed, it was said once that his love of smoking accounted for half his day. He does not smoke a cigarette for long, and there was a story about his smoking 300 cigarettes a day in this way. Whatever truth there was in this, it is quite certain that he underwent an operation in Rome to counteract the effects of excessive smoking. He still smokes a good deal, and is an authority on tobacco of all nations. His other spare-time interests are radio-listening and food.

King Zog is the hero of many unconventional episodes

recalling the stories of Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid's habits. The best-known case was that of the four commercial travellers playing cards in their Tirana hotel. Zog saw them at play through his telescope from the Royal Palace and telephoned to ask if he could join the game !

His advisers and relatives are continually planning marriages for him. A Portuguese merchant also brought a set of photographs of titled ladies for Zog's inspection. The King, who is in the early forties, approved that of Countess Johanna von Mikes of Hungary, and she was quickly flown to Tirana. But the Countess' family refused to consider her adoption of the Mohammedan faith. The Countess herself said of the affair : " I cannot yet speak."

The clan chiefs are said to want Fatima, the daughter of Shefguti Bey, as Queen, but Zog has a short way with advisers who proffer anything more than advice. Zog and his family wear West European clothes and his sisters are often seen in riding kit of London smartness. Apparently this flouting of the old customs is accepted without fuss.

There are occasional shocks, however, and one man I met, Ismet Toto, brother of Ethem Toto, ex-Minister of the Interior, was involved in one. He and his brother and a group of rebels seized Argyrocastro and cut the telephone lines after a few killings, but the Government soon suppressed the trouble. The ostensible reason for the rising was Zog's new ban on the wearing of the veil by women. But this was only an excuse for the Italian agents and the old enemies of Zog, and I remembered that in the Palazzo Littorio the previous summer Fascist youth leaders had told me of the coming Italian Empire which would embrace Albania and Egypt, with various protectorates in the Balkans.

The Albanian army is very well served with artillery and engineering personnel, and when the projected new roads are completed should be able to maintain internal order without difficulty.

In Scutari one of the infantry officers told me that there was no pro-Italian feeling in the army, in spite of the plenitude of instructors from Rome. The Albanians, he reminded me, had fought against the Italians during and after the war, when the country was temporarily under Italian occupation. The Yugoslavs, he thought, were meditating war sooner or later, and he admitted to me that the Government had not disarmed the mountaineers on the frontier for this reason. There is sound sense in this, for the Yugoslavs actually seized Scutari and several other Albanian towns in 1921. On this occasion the armed mountaineers rose against the invaders, who suffered considerable losses, for the hawk-eyed clansmen waste little of their precious ammunition.

In the clansmen's huts I was shown small arsenals of weapons, the relics of half a dozen wars, and found that the men were never happier than when discussing the points of rifles or guns. Banditry has now been suppressed, and there is little need for the continual carrying of weapons, but the old traditions die hard, and some of the older men still take their rifles when they set off for the fields or for a day's fishing on Lake Scutari. There are few wheeled vehicles in the extreme north, although a new bus service has started, and pack ponies, mules, and donkeys provide most of the transport. I bought a mule for thirty shillings, and found it very suitable for the mountain passes. On some passes the paths are very narrow, and travelling by night is dangerous. Ahead of me a Scottish ornithologist, Sir Fulke Agnew, had a narrow escape from death when his pony slipped over a precipice and he released the leading rope in the nick of time.

Albania is largely Moslem, but there is a colony of Christians in the north, and among these I found that the blood feud and other warlike traditions were maintained as strictly as elsewhere. Taxation is low, but there is no lack of complaints, and many tax-gatherers go armed. Before the war, when Albania was

ruled by the Sultan, it was believed impossible to collect taxes in this area, and the Bey at Scutari, which was then the capital, contented himself with military levies, which were never refused !

At one time the pay in the army was so low that the men were easy game for the agitators acting on behalf of the rival claimants to the throne, but Zog's long years of guerilla warfare have taught him a good deal, and one of his first decrees raised the army pay-rates for all ranks. As a result the military estimates account for more than forty per cent of the annual budget, although the army numbers less than 15,000 men all told.

One of the difficulties of the headquarters staff, I learned, is the bitter feeling which exists between certain Moslem sects. Thus the Sunis hate the Becktashis, and to post a Suni officer to a unit largely composed of Becktashis would invite mutiny. A surprising feature of the army organisation is that there is little friction between Christians and Moslems, who often serve in the same regiments. The war-like Gheg Moslems of the north have a much greater contempt for the southern Albanians of their own religion than for any other group, and live in perfect amity with the Catholic and Orthodox men of their own district.

The Albanians have preserved their language and traditions untouched through five centuries of struggle against the Turk, and are intensely patriotic. Pacifism, as it is understood in the West, has not yet penetrated these fastnesses, and I have no doubt that if war ever threatened again every man fit to bear arms would rally under the blood-red flag of Scanderbeg.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PALESTINE

ON THE PALE BLUE WATERS OF THE LAKE OF GALILEE was a little boat, and from it came the guttural cries of quarrelling men. Not even the marvellous beauty of the scene could end the war of clashing loyalties in men's hearts. Gulls soared overhead towards the north of the lake, where Mount Hermon glittered in the burning heat. The southern hills were darkly blue, and I could see no sign of movement on their rolling slopes. Just behind me were tall tamarisks, scorching in the heavy air.

On this lake Jesus had recruited some of his disciples—working men who had left their fishing nets to found a world religion. In Galilee in Jesus's time there was much talk of rebellion against the Roman legions, and in one abortive struggle Judas the Galilean was crucified with all his followers.

The air of the country is heavy and still, as though charged with some ominous force. Perhaps its qualities have played some part in the long tale of violence that is the history of the land.

From the Jewish tribal wars of the Old Testament to the invasion of Rome, from the wonderful march of Mohammed to the Crusades and Allenby's victory at Megiddo (Armageddon), the story is one of blood and strife.

Westerners are always surprised at the small area in which the wars preserved in the Jewish chronicles took place. To visualise the geography of the Holy Land is to gain a new perspective on this history, and to see

the vulgarity, sect-bickerings, and mercenary trafficking which profanes the Christian holy places must bring a feeling of nausea to all sensitive men conscious of the revolutionary nature of Jesus's message. Such men as Jesus scourged from the temple congregate to-day around the reputed Holy Sepulchre and the *wafd* which encloses the Dome of the Rock. Religious fanaticism has always flourished as a strong plant in this meeting place of races, and even to-day there are hermits who preserve the old traditions.

Arrived in partly-demolished Jaffa, I was soon assailed by Arab propagandists who had converted many of the visiting journalists to their cause. The trump cards were, of course, the promises made to the Shereef of Mecca and King Feisal by Sir Henry MacMahon and Colonel Lawrence. What few of the Arabs knew was that Lawrence had written in a post-war letter: "Zionist success would enormously reinforce the material development of Arab Syria and Iraq," and "From 1916 onwards, and especially in Paris, I worked against the idea of an Arab Confederation being formed before it had become a reality commercially, economically and geographically, by the slow pressure of many generations." He added in the same letter that he considered that the 1921 pacification had "honourably fulfilled our war-obligations and my hopes."

I found that this letter astonished the Arab leaders. Its existence has been ignored by the Arabic Press and most of the sheikhs have never heard of it. But in Damascus it produced a notable impression on some of the men who entered the city in triumph with the army of Feisal in 1918, and now occupy high positions.

One of the remarkable features of the Arab revolt in Palestine was the skill with which the Arab High Committee propaganda was disseminated. From the Arab graduates of American universities on the European delegation to the cheap radio sets of the Nablus fellahin, all showed careful planning and preparation.

That the Arabs have grievances is undeniable. The Jewish Communists have been very provocative, and the large-scale ejections of peasants from their holdings at Afuleh and Um Khalid by the Jewish owners were carried out with drastic efficiency. But I am convinced that the grievances were not so much economic as moral and spiritual. Religious intolerance and the belief that the Shereef of Mecca and King Feisal were tricked during the war had been important factors in spreading hatred. Nor must the envy of the Arab farmers at the amazing success of the immigrants be left out of account. The light, sandy soil of the coastal plain remained a semi-desert until fairly recently, as a great deal of money was required to produce an economic return.

I found that the stories of Arabs selling their lands and immediately squandering the money have little substance in fact. Actually, the Arab farmer who sells a fourth of his holding usually puts the money back into the land in the form of fertilisers, new machinery, improved buildings, etc. It is different with the absentee landlords, most of whom live at Nablus or Damascus, and here the Arabs have a legitimate grievance. Once these landlords sell to the immigrants, the Arab fellahin are forced in various ways to vacate their holdings, and when the small amounts paid as compensation are spent, they are driven to the towns as landless labourers. Several of them who have been treated in this way were leaders of the strikes and revolts.

That the Jewish influx has brought economic prosperity in its wake is certain, although Emil Ghouri and other leaders of the Arab Party have attempted to prove the opposite. Ghouri, for example, has complained that the surplus of imports over exports has enormously increased since 1920. This is true, but a moment's reflection would convince most people that this is a symptom of the new prosperity, for each Jewish entrant brings with him at least £1,000, and obviously spends a good deal of this on manufactured goods in his first

year in the country. To give only one example, in the previous twelve months over 8,000 Jews had arrived from Germany, most of whom had agreed to transfer £1,000 of their capital in the form of German goods. This is, in fact, one of Dr. Schacht's provisions in the official licence to export capital issued by the German Government.

The Palestine Government had a surplus of roughly £6,500,000, although expenditure has increased by nearly 60 per cent since 1922. This surplus was made possible by the large increase in revenue, an increase which has jumped from £2,000,000 in 1922 to £3,500,000 for the last financial year—nearly 116 per cent. The output of industry has increased by 800 per cent, and the citrus plantations by 860 per cent, since the Jewish immigration began, while the statistics of health and education record remarkable advances.

But the most decisive proof of the non-economic basis of the Arab hostility is shown by the large *Arab* immigration that has taken place during recent years. More than 15,000 Arabs from Syria, Trans-Jordan and Egypt have entered Palestine since 1933, attracted by the higher wages (3s. to 5s. a day for labourers), and better conditions available !

I had hoped to discuss these points with the Arab Party leaders, but after making an appointment in their hotel, the Secretary and President failed to put in an appearance, although Ghouri had earlier assured me that all my questions would be answered. (Apologies were made later.) I did succeed in interviewing various district leaders, however, and found them in ignorance of the real economic position as a result of the attitude of the Arabic Press, which prints only news and articles inimical to the Jews. What the Arab leaders are ignoring—in my belief wilfully—is the fact that a country's power of absorption is not determined solely by its size. Many countries are more thickly populated than Palestine. The intensity of development and the degree of industrialisation are the prime factors,

and the Government statistics show quite clearly that a Jewish family can live on less than five acres of irrigable land. The Arab cultivators, with their more primitive methods, require more land—anything up to 25 acres—to gain a living for themselves and their families.

One man in Jerusalem could have stopped the disturbances—Hadj El Husseini, the 42-years-old Mufti. But the Mufti cannot forget that he was imprisoned in 1920. His fanaticism, strengthened by the memories of prison and exile, was the chief stumbling-block in the road of settlement. His fantastic story of a Jewish plan to rebuild the Temple on the site of the Dome of the Rock gained widespread credence among the Arabs, despite official denials, printed in Arabic, and the temporary banning of the *Voice of Islam* newspaper had little effect. And the British task was complicated by the immense Moslem population of the eastern empire, many of whom look to the Mufti as their spiritual leader.

Some of the older Jewish communities found themselves isolated and in serious danger as a result of the rising, and I heard some pitiful tales in the Galilean hills. Thus on the road from Acre to Safed is the village of Bukeia, where the land is worked communally by Jews, Christian Arabs, and Druses. The Jews claim that their families have lived in this area continuously for over 2,000 years, although this is open to doubt. To-day they are surrounded by foes, and had it not been for the help of European philanthropists, they would have been unable to survive. Beyond Bukeia the road lies through a dense forest of pine and beech, and ambushes are so frequent that the Jews delegate their marketing to their Christian Arab friends. As if Arab snipers and fanatical Druses, to say nothing of wandering Bedouin, did not provide enough danger for this journey, one farmer assured me that leopards sometimes come down from the wooded upper slopes of the Jermuk mountain ! Actually, I reached Safed without incident, after a few false alarms. Much of the country around is wild and deserted, littered with strangely carved

stones and the ruins of Jewish settlements. Bedouin tribes claim this land, in which a huge rock marks the pit into which Joseph was thrown by his brethren. Safed was the scene of a horrible massacre of Jews in 1929, when 200 houses were burned. Many of the new houses, I noticed, have been designed like military blockhouses, and it is certain that another attempt would not find the Jews unarmed, as happened in 1929.

In Nablus, centre of Arab nationalism, I watched a procession of armoured cars and laden mules on its way to the hill-caves, where hundreds of Arabs were still encamped. The absence of roads and the difficulty of even aerial observation combined to make the " smoking-out " process arduous and uncertain, and the audacious raids on the lines of communication were reminiscent of Colonel Lawrence's best work against the Turks.

In Nablus I found the last surviving colony of the Samaritans, who have lived in the country for an unbroken period of 2,500 years. Only about fifty families remain, maintaining themselves through the sale of relics and manufactured articles. So strong is the anti-Jewish feeling in the town that not a single immigrant has attempted to settle here, in spite of the cheap land available. The old town was shattered by the 1927 earthquake, and many districts are still debris-strewn, although sanitation and general cleanliness have vastly improved since the arrival of the British troops.

The leaders of public opinion in Nablus are the wealthy Moslem landowners, who make no secret of their sympathies. One of them praised Emil Ghouri, the 36-years-old Secretary of the Arab Party, to me saying : " We sent him to America, to the University of Cincinnati, and he will pay us a good dividend."

While the British columns were closing in on the Arab irregulars in the Nablus district, the Arab-Jew propaganda war in the towns continued unabated.

In these paper exchanges the Arabs scored notable successes.

Some of the Arab leaders in Jerusalem told me quite boldly that if their demands for an autonomous government and the expulsion of the Jews were not conceded they would stir up Ibn Sa'ud, Abdallah of Trans-Jordan, and the eastern desert tribes in a general holy war.

The Jewish Communists had made provocative speeches; the refugee immigrants had shown a distressing ignorance in their flouting of Moslem tradition and customs; and the expulsion of Arabs from their holdings at Zibeidat, Tal'un and Attireh were brutally thorough. But the pretence of the Arab leaders that Jewish immigration has worsened Palestine's economic position is absurd. I was at pains to investigate this.

Having received a long letter from Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the President of the Zionists, and a fair résumé of the Jewish case, I visited the new colonies in the Valley of Jezreel, and studied the economic position in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv.

The Jewish immigrants are bringing with them large amounts of capital, and are spending as much as £300 an acre on their holdings.

I saw the Arab sub-leaders in Nablus, headquarters of the British forces, and heard more threats of a rising across the Jordan when the hills were finally pacified.

The Moslem chiefs in Nablus are frantically anti-Jewish, and no Jew dared show himself in the town.

The technique of ambush has been carefully studied, and with the rifles and revolvers imported in 1935 (disguised as cement from Belgium), the guerillas presented an awkward problem.

Anxious to test opinion in the south, I drove across three frontiers within a single day's journey. From the Egyptian frontier station at Kuntilla, where the telegraph poles end, the pass through the bare brown mountains fringing the Gulf of the Red Sea falls about 1,000 yards very quickly.

The pass, which is part of the ancient pilgrims' way, is in Palestine, and half an hour later, in the middle of

the huge sandy Wadi of the Araba, I was in Trans-Jordan, before Akaba, famous as the scene of one of Lawrence's exploits. The Government Serai displayed the red, black, green and white flag of Abdallah, and I was expected to halt, but continued along the Wadi until I had entered the Hejaz.

The police cameliers of Ibn Sa'ud, whom I had thought to see in the ruined Turkish fort, were not visible, and I did not remain long in the Moslem Holy Land. Hejaz means " barrier," and the country is closed to infidels, while the border Bedouin have a habit of shooting and robbing unexpected visitors. I had applied to the Saudi Arabia Legation in London for permission to visit Mecca, but this was refused.

I found that if the British administration was defended as necessary for the efficient organisation and development of the country, as it is, the Arabs were much less hostile. Democracy and democratic circumlocutions are foreign to the Arab, who is only prepared to give his loyalty to strong and courageous leadership, and there can be no doubt that half-hearted attempts to introduce Western institutions among the Arabs in Palestine have weakened our prestige. Expert word-spinners themselves, the Arabs expect more from a ruling race.

Italian propaganda has been broadcast throughout Palestine since the summer of 1935, in an effort to embarrass the British Government while the Abyssinian campaign was being pushed forward. Cheap radio sets, distributed in Galilee for a few shillings, were tuned in to Bari, from where Italians, speaking fluent Arabic, read incitements to revolt and attacks on the British.

Jerusalem newspapers printed in Arabic were known to be receiving Italian bank drafts until recently, and in Nablus one of the sheikhs told me that the Italian agents had been welcomed as a useful threat to the Mandate, although there is not a Moslem in the country who would prefer Italian rule to our own.

Jerusalem itself, baking in the glaring heat, was a

city of rumour and counter-rumour. The wildest stories of desert risings and the hushed-up skirmishes were discussed, while cynical journalists from a dozen countries compared notes in the cool of the King David Hotel.

The official news bulletins, printed in the three languages of the country, Hebrew, Arabic and English, were barren of details, and I was glad to leave the oppressive atmosphere of the capital for the fighting zone.

The average Arab income is about £40 a year, and it is certain that the large stores of arms in their hands could not have been obtained without outside help. The civil police are fully conscious of this, and one of their most important raids delayed me in Jaffa.

Jaffa was greatly agitated, for the destruction of part of the old town with dynamite and tanks unloosed a flood of invective in the Arabic Press, which had put slogans in the hand of every disease-ridden beggar.

It will be many months before the country is finally pacified, and the solution must be a compromise. British generosity in allowing freedom of speech to all parties has been grievously imposed upon by foreign agents and professional politicians.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PALESTINE (CONTINUED)

IN HEARING THAT I MEANT TO VISIT BETHLEHEM, or Beit-Lahm, as it is now called, a soldier friend in Jerusalem warned me against ambushes and nocturnal journeys.

His warning was timely enough, for my train to Lydda had been fired on by the rebels, and every night brought fresh reports of terrorist activities. On the road towards Bethlehem I was delayed by an Arab camel-driver and reached the outskirts of the town an hour or so later than I had intended.

The country around the birthplace of Jesus is very fertile, and many farmers gather two crops a year. But frequent stony paths and massive boulders disturb the harmony of the landscape. On the hot, dusty road were dark-faced Arabs on donkeys and camels, veiled women, and fezzed tradesmen. Occasionally a car jolted past, leaving a trail of smoke and spinning pebbles. The sun glared down on the dry earth with a passionate intensity, and in the deep azure of the cloudless sky a distant black speck revealed itself as a reconnoitring plane.

Bethlehem is on a terraced limestone hill, which is plentifully planted with olives, fig trees, and vines. High above sea level, the town is only five miles from Jerusalem, and the bare stony hills behind reminded me of the capital.

The road below the hill was flanked by lakelets of scarlet poppies, clover, cyclamen, and anemones, and

the flowers made a pretty foreground for the grey, flat-roofed houses. Legend has it that the road along which I walked had been trodden by the caravan of the Magi, and the town has changed little since their time.

Soon I was up the winding path and in the narrow, tortuous streets. The manufacture of crosses, rosaries and religious ornaments is the principal industry, and the craftsmen have acquired great skill in the decorative arts. The men sat in the shade of their open shops and worked slowly, but steadily. The streets were cleaner than in most Near Eastern towns, and I noticed many fair skins among the women. Several men were of a definitely West European cast of countenance, and I saw a ragged little boy playing in the dirt who had dark blue eyes.

Bethlehem women have a very distinctive dress—a long dark red cloth gown, embroidered in silk. They looked much smarter and prettier than the Jerusalem women, and even the older married women bore themselves well.

The single women have ribbons in their hair, and only the married women are allowed to wear the coif, which is a stiff veil of bleached cloth fastened above the head and falling behind below the neck—similar to the English style of Crusading times.

My first visit was to police headquarters, where I blessed my delays, for two hours before my arrival two bombs had been exploded against the wall, and soldiers were searching for guerillas suspected to be in the town or nearby.

In the heat of the early afternoon the streets were almost deserted, but with the sinking of the sun the market place again began to buzz with guttural cries.

Our soldiers guarded the entrance to the Basilica, and their young faces were set and serious, for the nervous strain of continual vigilance against creeping assassins is considerable.

An underground passage brought me into the Grotto of the Nativity, which is cut into the solid rock, similar

to others in the town, and vaulted over. Below the main altar is the silver star, which is claimed to mark the spot on which Jesus was born. The Grotto has seen bloodshed and strife and sectarian war, and the dozens of lamps and pictures reminded me of this as I entered. How much more impressive must have been the actual scene of the birth itself, with its rustic simplicity and virtuous poverty, and the new born child watched over by the Nazarene carpenter and his wife and their humble friends on a cold December night.

A few steps led into the Chapel of the Manger, which is built around what is said to be the actual place on which Jesus was laid after birth. Further on is the Chapel of the Magi.

From the Grotto I went into the Basilica where Baldwin was crowned King of Jerusalem, after his successful crusade, on Christmas Day, 1100. This day has a strange association with Bethlehem, for many events in the little town's history have happened on this great anniversary.

From the Field of the Shepherds outside the town I went down a narrow path to the fertile field of Boaz, and as I stared out over the surrounding country I thought of the materialism which still blinded men to the message of Christianity's founder. From the two hills on which the modern Beit-Lahm is built two worlds are visible, one of barren bleak land and stony hill, and another of rich fields and colourful blossom. The scene seemed symbolical of Palestine's troubled history.

In the market, crowds haggled noisily over prices and beggars demanded baksheesh. The Arabs discussed the fighting, and a dozen rumours were affirmed and contradicted. Military lorries rolled slowly through the streets, and I caught a glimpse of Lewis guns over piles of store-cases.

From the highest point of the town, accompanied by an Arab trader with whom I had made friends, I watched a blue mist rise over the mountains of Moab. He spoke

continually of the fighting, and told me an involved story of adventurers and foreign agents stirring up trouble.

Dinner was of roast lamb, fish fried in olive oil, and fruit, with the sticky sweets beloved by most Levantines. At night the guttural Arabic cries of the salesmen were stilled and the little town was at peace. I thought of Ruth in these fields and of David watching his sheep. A woman with a coif was startled by me as I turned a corner, and scuttled past, drawing her veil round her face. A soldier told me of new warnings of street ambush and of armed peasants.

I must go northward to Nablus and Galilee, where the embers of revolt still glowed.

Bethlehem lay sleeping under the golden moon.

There is no coastline in the old or new world which has such romantic memories as that of Syria. Here, for once, reality reaches up to and goes far beyond expectation.

As travellers we have all had disappointments—sometimes a far-famed beauty spot turns out to be an island in a sea of sordidness and vulgarity, whose waves wash away the rhapsodies of historians. But the Mediterranean coast from Tyre to Latakia is different.

There is magic in the very names—Tyre and Sidon, and then Lebanon and Damascus and Krak-des-Chevaliers.

On the coast road that runs beside the deep blue Mediterranean I thought of the Crusaders from Britain who had once conquered this strange land. Our own S. George was the patron of Beyrout many years before the Crusaders sewed his cross on their flags.

The yellow sand glistened in the warm sunshine and from the beach I stared over the orange and banana groves towards the far snow-crested Lebanon mountain.

Along the road are dozens of little eating-houses, each with its complement of smoking and talking

Syrians, sipping tiny cups of coffee, or eating sticky sweets. Occasionally motor cars went honking past in clouds of dust and small stones, cursed by the camel-drivers and tradesmen on donkeys. A filthy beggar in ancient rags and of uncertain age shouted a guttural demand for alms, and the pert children tried to sell me something every time I went through a village.

Labourers, wearing flimsy baggy trousers, were repairing the road, not knowing what relics of long-dead civilisation their spades would turn up. Perhaps coins or jewels of the Phœnicians who sailed from these parts to Cornwall in the long ago, when the world was young.

In a tiny Khan (inn) I argued about politics with a little Syrian, whose words poured out in torrents—French, interlarded with the flotsam of half a dozen tongues. Everybody talks politics in Syria—one cannot escape them anywhere, these days—and everyone is certain he is right. Perhaps I should not have said I argued with the Syrian, because we agreed about a lot of things, and he stood me a drink of lemonade, cooled with snow from Lebanon, as a mark of good-will.

I should call on his brother in Beyrout, he said, and I would be made welcome. These chance encounters and introductions make a bizarre accompaniment to every Near Eastern journey.

Then Tyre—whose cypresses were ordered by Solomon for his temple. Tyre is still a town of shipbuilders and traders, but its glories have vanished. I went down to the beach to see the sea shells from which the famous Tyrian purple was made to ornament the togas of the Roman conquerors. The shells remain, but the secret of the wonderful dye is lost. Tyre to-day is squalid and dirty, and its inhabitants are unconscious of the ghosts of the past.

From an elevation near the town I stared out to sea and forgot the unwashed traffickers below, with their jerking hands and screeching voices. Fishing boats

rocked peacefully in the clear air and a mile or so out was a *Messageries Maritimes* steamer heading for Alexandretta. On the horizon was a white sail.

In the atmosphere of Tyre is something vigorous and bright, which reminded me somehow of the North of England—a call to action and adventure and vast places—something essentially hard and alive. It had driven Semitic traders to the ends of the ancient world from this beach, their bold greed stifling terror and superstition.

Half an hour's journey north from Es Sur, as Tyre is now called, is Sidon. Over breakfast that morning of coffee and hard flat tasteless cakes, an old man had warned me of the wickedness of Sidon. Another strange echo from the past ! For once Sidon was spoken of as the wickedest city on earth !

Along the road women were bent at their labour in the fields—a sight as familiar as the half-asleep men outside the Khans—in its way a crystallisation of Eastern life.

Sidon lay basking in the hazy heat, made beautiful by the orange and olive groves behind. Its little flat-roofed houses and crooked streets seemed almost empty at first, but inside the shade of windowless shops I found the craftsmen busy with their tools. Europeans who stare in a shop in Sidon court invitation within, and soon I was drinking coffee with a jeweller. My Arabic is very small and I had to make one word do the work of a sentence, but a smile and the capacity to listen make a difference, in the East as in England.

I found little wickedness in the new Sidon—there were Arab dancing girls and some drinking dives and tales of magicians and dope-runners, but nothing unusual. Yet the town *was* different from Tyre and the other cities of the coast. In its eating-houses and music there seemed something raffish and daring that struck a new note. Or perhaps I only imagined that—I don't know.

I found that H. V. Morton was right when he said that

Sidon still remembered Lady Hester Stanhope, William Pitt's niece, who made herself Princess of the Lebanon after being hostess at 10 Downing Street. She studied magic, smoked a hookah, lived in a stronghold here, whipped her slaves, and made war on opposition tribes. Her stormy career ended here and she is buried on a Syrian hill—thousands of miles from her kin.

I left Palestine with a feeling of pride in the work achieved under British direction. Had the country been left to the Turk, it would have remained a desert. As things are civilisation has been advanced another step and the Jews, deprived of a national home for two thousand years, have been given their opportunity to realise a long-cherished dream.

So far as the Arab grievances are concerned, these could easily be resolved by the British administration were its officers supplied with power and armed force sufficient to win respect for the law. Any attempt to hold the country with a handful of men in face of large-scale foreign propaganda cannot hope to succeed. At the same time the Arabs should be given proof of our regard and desire to maintain their rights and privileges. There are several varieties of the 1937 partition scheme in the files of Government House, and any of these would suffice to resolve the land-sales and eviction disputes. The contra-arguments of the Arabs are groundless.

There is no possibility of British withdrawal from the country for a long period, and in any case neither Arab nor Jew desires such an event.

Meanwhile the death penalty should be inflicted on all foreigners inciting the population to violence and spreading Fascist or Communist propaganda, and Arabs and Jewish officials who are betraying their oaths of office by disorder should be similarly dealt with. Fines on villages and detention in concentration camps (where conditions are better than in the villages) make little impression on the Eastern mind, which recognises that leadership belongs to those who precede

and that covenants without the sword are so much paper.

How far the anti-British propaganda has already progressed may be seen from the fact that the 1937 Coronation was not celebrated by the Jerusalem Arabs, while on the Prophet's Birthday, ten days later, the Arab national flag was flown everywhere, and pictures of the King of Iraq, Hitler, and Mussolini, with German and Italian flags, were displayed. Hitler was acclaimed by the Arabs because of his continual anti-Jewish campaign, and Mussolini because he had declared himself the friend of the Arabs during his Libya visit. Such happenings reveal a threat to our prestige—a threat also made patent by the anxiety of the Government to suppress news of Italian propaganda in Palestine during the 1936 troubles. Prestige is not, however, upheld by diplomatic fencing, and good manners are of little value when dealing with bloodthirsty pirates. Had the Arab revolt of 1936 occurred under a Turkish administration, the leaders would have finished in sacks ; villages would have been looted and burned ; and thousands of people tortured and killed in the public squares. Some of my Palestinian friends who lived under the Turk during the war would consider this description very inadequate. It is sufficient to say that under the British administration the Arab and Jew have been allowed a great deal of their own way, to say and to do as they wished, while foreign agents have found no difficulty in entering and leaving the country, and sectarian newspapers have been granted freedom of attack without responsibility. Under such circumstances, a rebellion was only a question of time when the High Commissioner had only a tiny force at his disposal. The British officials and soldiers, worthy of the highest praise for their courage and skill, were betrayed by the politicians at home, fearful of " incidents " and trouble, and, indeed, the decision to send reinforcements to Palestine was only made after very urgent applications.

There is hope for the future in that the men on the spot are in every way worthy representatives of the Empire. I am glad to call some of them personal friends and the anonymous but important work they are doing in creating educational and health services, building roads, destroying the Haifa drug traffic, and policing the desert frontier is showing the thinking Arab where his real friends are.

For indeed it is Britain which is the real Protector of Islam, and freedom of worship is guaranteed to every Moslem within the Empire. Even in the Mother Country there are Mosques for the Moslem population, and we have had several Moslem peers. Britain's civilising mission is nowhere better displayed than in Moslem countries like Egypt, the Sudan, Palestine and Mohammedan India. These countries, won for us by the sword, have been given civilisation, law, railways, hospitals, schools, wealth, universities, roads, clinics. Tyrants have been removed, freedom guaranteed to all, water brought to the dry plains and deserts, and the new virtues of fraternity and tolerance encouraged. To-day we no longer speak of maintaining a military occupation. Egypt has, indeed, been given her independence. But a sufficiently strong whip must be held to discipline the wayward children and those liable to fall among thieves and bad companions.

In doing this we shall be completing a most Christian work. Jesus himself, the first apostle of tolerance, spent his short life of thirty-three years among the intolerant, rude, cynical, ignorant, and bestial. His sensitive and loving spirit must have been strengthened by a will of steel not to break against the calumny, stupidity and ridicule which oppressed and surrounded him. This side of the story of Jesus is glossed over by the exegesists, whose bony hands seem everywhere to make a mystery, a pseudo-science and a formula out of this great human tragedy. But it appears nevertheless in his reply to his mother at the Cana wedding—"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (John 2, 4). Again when he

flogged the Jewish money-changers and traders from the Temple. "My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves!" (Luke 19, 46). Also in his replies to the priests and lawyers and his disciples. Most poignantly in his final and terrible words on the cross: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15, 34). When he was left to die alone, renounced by his lieutenants, betrayed by a disciple, apparently forgotten by the world, while the rabble to which he had preached day after day was seeking its pleasure in the city. But Jesus was victorious in his death—for his death was indeed a resurrection of his spirit in the minds of those who had heard and met him and who were to carry his message across the seas. To-day Arabs and Jews live in the city which Jesus set out to conquer—people of alien faiths. But they are united under another flag which has a cross as its symbol, and which represents the triumph of light over darkness, of civilisation over savagery, of education over ignorance, of toleration over tyranny and of the rights of the individual over savage idols.

We must hold Palestine as a sacred trust of civilisation and in so doing we shall succeed where the Crusaders failed, giving peace and justice to Arab and Jew alike, respecting their beliefs and customs, in the tolerant spirit of the humble worker who from this stony hot land sent forth his message of peace and good will to all the world.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SYRIA AND TRANS-JORDAN

BEYROUT IS A BIG SPRAWLING TOWN FULL OF NOISE. Jolting trams rattle through the narrow streets overlooking the curving S. George's Bay, half-full of ships. There are gay, half-French cafés and modern shops and big squares and strange architectural blends. Here I heard more French than anywhere in mandated Syria. A cosmopolitan throng crowds the streets—scowling Arabs in white robes, proud painted Druses, handsome French officers and men, brown and black Senegalese, the sailors of a dozen lands, quick-eyed Greeks with pendant ear-rings, quiet-faced Englishmen, fat brown women, slim French girls, and nondescript Levantines who can answer questions in most languages.

Around the town are the big Lebanon mountains, mist-capped as the day fades beyond their peaks.

Beyrout is merry by night, like all such seaports. In my hotel register were strange names and strange signatures and crosses—what stories their owners could tell!

The radio brought the voices and music of Paris entertainers to accompany strange dancing, and laughter and song went up towards the ink-blue sky until very late.

Next day the sea looked wine-coloured against the ivory and lilac buildings of the beach-side. Turbaned men in silken suits strolled past to watch an old shifty-faced public letter-writer who was scratching a pointed reed across thick paper from right to left for a young

man—a love letter. The ink was in a carved wooden holder, like a dagger-sheath. Shrouded women in the rough, bleached linen of Syria pattered by as I stood over the letter-writer, and a café owner hauled the tricolour up the pole in his gardens. I visited the picturesque mosques and bazaars and watched street acrobats fling themselves high in the air and tie themselves in knots for a few centimes.

That night I went up to the houses of the rich merchants outside the town, where terraced gardens of exotic shrubs and flowers overhung the sea in the purple dusk.

The white magnolia blossoms and roses filled the night with perfume, and sparkling fountains sent their spray towards a greenish-blue sky. The mountains were tinged faintly amethyst over the pine-strewn foothills. From the gardens came the music of native and French bands—Viennese waltzes succeeding the harsh beat of an Arabian melody. Westerners dislike Eastern music, but after a time one's ear gets tuned in to it somehow, which makes it a little easier to listen.

From Beyrout, Syria rolls herself out in rich vineyards, cornfields, and orange groves, with the mountains as a perpetual background. There are many new military roads. Only one road is difficult—that to the ruined Crusaders' castle of Krak-des-Chevaliers, which lies north of Syrian Tripoli. The Moslem who lent me a car for the journey fingered his ninety-nine-bead rosary as he wished me a peaceful journey.

The rich fields gave way to nullahs and barren stretches of desert. Sprawling deserted sand, the black tents of the Bedouin and filthy huts, then rocks and sparse grass, red and blue anemones and a deep ravine. Few men and fewer women lived in this lonely land. Suddenly the monstrous towered fortress lowered ahead.

Krak-des-Chevaliers looks like the magic castle seen on the covers of fairy-tales. Three thousand feet above sea level are the bastioned walls of this feudal fortress, built eight centuries ago by the Christian Knights.

Narrow slits in the walls stare like suspicious eyes on the newcomer. It was the greatest pile I had ever seen—far bigger than any English castle.

Inside the walls is an Arab village—hovels built from the fallen stones. The rooms and halls are monstrous, and I felt happy as I always do in vast buildings. I felt no pity for the slinking and whimpering Arabs. What had the rat-faced and frightened wretches to do with this splendour? The bold-faced Crusaders from the far West had erected this monument to the age of chivalry. Even its Gothic arches commemorated the northern spirit which had helped them face unknown dangers and death to recover the Holy Places for the Cross.

After inspecting stables, guard-houses, chapels and two council-chambers, I passed out through the broken portcullis and set off back along the broken road. I made good speed, mindful of the warnings I had been given in Beyrout. The road had seen many public hangings and I had no intention of inspiring another.

After the fortress, Beyrout seemed shoddy and I lost no time in moving north to Damascus by the French post road that climbs 5,000 feet over the mountains. From the highest points a vast rugged world of rock and plateaux could be seen stretching for thirty leagues beyond in the snow-clear air. Soon I was in the plain of El Bikar, inhabited by a medley of races—Druses, Maronites, Metawali and orthodox Moslem Arabs. The Druses, who are said to worship a golden calf, and take great precautions to keep their religion a secret, paint the faces of their warriors and are famed for their military virtues. Among them I heard strange tales of Satan-worshippers and conical shining towers and black-serpent symbols in Eastern Syria which sounded fantastic romances, but proved true enough in reality. Indeed, much that would sound absurd in the West, is normal in this strange land where civilisations mingle and the past is not yet sunk beneath the machine life and machine beliefs of twentieth century Europe.

Before passing through the flat fields of the Ante-Lebanon I read the Koran and recalled Mohammed's praise of Damascus, the oldest city in the world, which has given its name to roses, swords, and figured cloth.

Damascus has been aptly compared to a pearl set among opals, and after the desert the thickets of pomegranates and roses ending in the white minarets and domes and the plash of sparkling water seem to bring physical and mental refreshment. Around the city, in a vast plain, are gardens of palm and fig trees and rolling lakes of blossom—apricot, cherry, pear, and damson.

Abraham knew this city two thousand years before Jesus. Naaman, the leper, lived here. Successive conquerors had swept through its streets down the centuries—even Tamerlane with his Golden Horde of Mongolians had been here seeking treasures for his palace at Samarkand.

There is much that is sordid about Damascus to-day, its gates and walls have gone and in many bazaars are the goods of the Western and Eastern factories, but the narrow streets, built to catch the maximum of shade, are redeemed by their surroundings. The river El Barada rushes through the city and the sound of tumbling water means happiness to the desert Arab. There are many fountains, and ancient inns, where the merchants and ambassadors from Baghdad stayed with their camel-trains.

Around the city are beds of flowers, and from them the glittering minarets of the mosques and the huge arches of the curving streets take on a new beauty.

Through the lines of veiled women in the Silk Bazaar I went through the Bazaar of Spiked Shoes to that of the Silversmiths. Here was a multitude of rare jewels, amulets, and weapons. A hundred voices sought my ear, but I was only inveigled into coffee-drinking by an old turbaned Arab, who saw my interest in his silver-hilted swords and daggers. The filigree work on some of the yataghan-sheaths was remarkably good, and the

shining sword blades were almost as pliable as leather. Each weapon had a history, and as Damascus merchants have unlimited time I might have sat there for hours had I not seized an opportunity for a polite withdrawal. This is not always easy, and Europeans must learn to adapt themselves to the haggling technique. I have seen visitors give a merchant the £10 that he asked for a carpet—almost an insult to his salesmanship! The experienced buyer in a similar position would snort and walk away, to return later, or laugh and pass on to another article. If he was in a hurry he might offer 10s. The merchant would then go through *his* pantomime of horror or amusement, and reduce his price to £8, for a special and stated reason. The buyer would then carefully examine the carpet, pass some slighting remarks and offer 15s. When both parties grew a little hoarse the proceedings would stop for coffee-making and the bargaining might finish with a sale at 30s. This method is universal throughout the East, and the wealthy travellers who refuse to play the game lose money and earn the scorn of the dealers.

From the chatter and noise of the Bazaars I went through an avenue of Roman columns to the Grand Mosque. Hooting motor-vans rolled past the minaret from which I had heard the turbaned muezzin call the faithful to the first prayer of the day. Not far away was the tower from which S. Paul is said to have been lowered in a basket.

I had looked forward to seeing the Street called Straight for many years, but had never imagined it as it is—dark with uninviting side-alleys and dirty houses and strange-shaped mosques. The street has an arched roof, like many others in Damascus, which was built to gain the maximum of shade for its citizens, and the cool and dark brought back untimely memories of Vauxhall Bridge. But it had a different smell to Vauxhall Bridge!

In this street, Paul was healed of his blindness by

Ananias, and not far away from the Grand Mosque is the tomb of Saladin, the brave champion of another faith.

In a café room of the Street called Straight I had an appointment with a Syrian sheikh. I gave him the ceremonial salute and we drank the inevitable coffee before coming to business. He was old and had seen many wars and troubles. I wished to visit the monastery of the Dancing Dervishes. Could it be arranged? Yes, he knew a man. We talked of religion and spiritual things. I was glad of my Koran readings. I told him I hoped to visit Mecca, but he shook his head with a smile. His pessimism was later justified, but at the time I was still hopeful.

We spoke of differences between East and West; for he had met many Europeans and was a man of great learning and penetration. "Your El Orens" (meaning Colonel Lawrence), "was a brave, fine man. He had conversation. But most Westerners do not talk. Their speech is only question and answer, even among themselves. And they always hurry without knowing whither they go."

We talked of Christianity and Islam and the strange faiths of Syria. Before going he presented me with a silver casket which enclosed a tiny copy of the Koran, less than an inch square—an amulet, for it had been rubbed against the Holy Kaaba, the famous Black Stone of distant Mecca, and against the tomb of the Prophet himself at Medina. On the casket was an Arabic quotation from the Koran. Such an amulet, he promised, would guard its owner against danger.

He gave me introductions to other notabilities which proved of great value, and we parted with expressions of good-will.

The monastery visit was duller than I had expected, but Damascus had other attractions.

One day I went to the house of a magician who had been recommended to me. Squatted on the floor, he talked of cheiromancy and divination. By pouring

his black ink on the thumb-nail—or sometimes the palm—of a virgin or a boy he could warn his consultants of dangers to come, he claimed. His unpretentious dwelling had all the accessories of his art—a crystal ball, black hangings sewn with quotations from the Arab classics, and a shelf of strange books. He himself had known many lands, and had seen much wickedness. One day, he promised, I should return to Damascus—"under very different circumstances." Was this a promise or a threat? I looked into his coal-black eyes and could find no reassurance.

Before I could gain a good Arabic accent for my slender vocabulary I must first drink of the waters of the holy spring of Zem-Zem—this was his final piece of advice!

Out into the shadowed street, alive with laden donkeys, fezzed traders, ragged children, and tall sunburnt men from the desert, I went to my lodgings to complete preparations for Baalbek, in the north-west.

Baalbek, the City of the Sun, a few hours' journey from Damascus, is the crumbling centre of an ancient state. The dead city's temples stand on a vast stone platform—as though challenging Time itself. Baalbek is voluptuous but masculine—symbolical of a fiercer age.

When its yellow columns are surrounded by white blossom the scene is one of the loveliest in the East, and Nature's changing moods invest it with the interest due to a carefully-planned stage spectacle. Here one can drink in beauty itself in deep draughts of the sun-warmed desert air.

The ravages of time have not disturbed the aloofness with which the vast pillars of the Temples of the Sun and of Bacchus confront the present and future. Cain, the murderer of Abel, is said to have founded the city, and its history is saturated with blood. From afar the golden columns look light and the skilful architecture disguises the monstrous size of the buildings. Behind Baalbek the snow-capped mountains provide a background of silvery light for the monstrous ruins, where

the grotesque rites of Baal were celebrated long before Solomon's days.

I walked through the fallen columns, broken capitals, and carved caverns to the halls of sacrifice, and went up a long, glistening stairway to the Temple of Jupiter, whose broad terrace is built on stones said to be the largest in the world. Some of the blocks of Egyptian granite were three years in coming from the Nile mouth to this colourful desert.

The twenty-one late Corinthian columns which form the Temple of Bacchus are ornamented with Greek-Roman detail—dragons, dolphins, and satyrs, worked with painstaking skill.

Not far away is a quarry from which came some of the great stones used in building the city. A colossal specimen survived—named Hajar-el-rublea by the Arabs —71 feet long, 14 feet high and 13 feet wide, weighing over 1,000 tons.

By day when the tall golden columns shoot up into the turquoise sky, Baalbek looks splendid, but by moonlight the ruins receive new qualities. From the exit of the underground passage which leads into the heart of the deserted ruins the columns look menacing and savagely evil. Far below wink the little fires of the Arab village of Baalbek, but in the cold ruins there is a deathly hush. The moon cuts geometrical patches on the basalt blocks, and footsteps ring out metallically across the grey and tawny courts. I stared out over tall poplars towards the dark mountains, whose tips showed clear against the deep blue sky. The purple and orange and emerald hues of twilight had long since died and Baalbek was once more silent and menacing and beautiful in the crystal-like night air. The natives fear to visit the ruins after dark, and it is no wonder, for on impressionable minds the atmosphere which every city creates for itself would here strike hammer-blows of dread and evil.

On across the desert to Palmyra, the dead city of Zenobia, guarded by dark towers, and looking like an

ivory carving. I had always wished to see the city, for not far from my own home in northern England had been found the tomb of a Palmyran woman, wife of a Roman legionary who had helped guard the frontiers of the empire against the barbarians. What had she thought as she shivered on that northern coast of cold sea-fog and icy wind and rude strength? The grey-brown earth stretched in a vast plain between the mountains, and on it lay miles of columns and walls and the huge Sun Temple. Everywhere were broken blocks of masonry and crumbling stones. The great caliphs of Baghdad must have called here on their way westward. Mark Antony had made a treaty with the city, not wishing to risk his legions on these golden sands. Emperor Hadrian—another link with far Northumbria—had come here on his tour of the Eastern Empire.

In the Street of the Columns I thought of Zenobia, and of Chaucer's lines to her.

Ambitious and clever as Cleopatra, she had won a great reputation with her court, but all vanished beneath the heel of Aurelian.

About Palmyra to-day there is something of luxurious surfeit—showing that the merchant princes of the city had lacked the grandiose ideas of the Baalbek priests. Cornices and pilasters and friezes showed the over-elaboration that still jars on sensitive eyes in some gaudy modernist hotels to-day.

But Palmyra at least escapes the taint of vulgarity that so often spoils the art of merchant builders. Lurking amid the ruins I saw more natives than in Baalbek. Here they were unafraid.

The city looks at its best in the early morning, when its pale yellow temples rise out of the night haze and take in the warm colour of golden alabaster as the Eastern sun shoots high above the purple horizon. Such beauty is so rare that parting is in very truth sweet sorrow.

The time had come for me to return to Palestine

and the eastern desert, and my last view of Zenobia's city was a pale colonnade in a curve of the sandy waste.

On to the southern frontier again, and I said good-bye to my new friends with regret that I had left so much unexplored.

"*Salaam aleikum*," cried my host, as I left Damascus—"Peace be unto you."

"*Aleikum salaam*," I replied. "And unto you peace"—the centuries old salute of the East.

I intended to discuss the inner history of the Lawrence negotiations with the Emir Abdallah ibn Hussein, ruler of Trans-Jordan and brother of the dead Feisal. Abdallah knows all the facts of the case, for he was in command of a Shereefian force when Lawrence—then only a staff captain seconded for Foreign Office duty—joined Feisal at Jiddah.

But I found that Abdallah is resolved to keep silence about these matters, and I do not blame him. For the Emir, always a clever politician, has to steer a dangerous course between the ambitions of Ibn Sa'ud, the Lord of the Hejaz, the schemes of his own son, Prince Talal, the Arab nationalism of the wild Bedouin, and the British air and military forces on the frontier.

Picturesque delegations from Mecca, Nablus, Jerusalem and Damascus were visiting the little palace at Amman every week with fresh plans, but Abdallah was trained in a good school—that of Abdul the Damned at Constantinople—and I had no doubt that he would not throw away his £16,000 annual subsidy from the British.

The train from Jerusalem that took me on the first stage of my journey to the desert was fired on by Arab snipers, but there were no casualties aboard, and after returning the fire we pushed forward, a patrol ahead searching for bombs on the line. I recalled the technique of the Lawrence raids—wired bombs under the rails at a curve and a Lewis-gun team on a nearby vantage point, ready to sweep the carriages. Fortunately the raiders lacked this tactical skill.

Outside the rococo palace of Abdallah, crowned by his red, white, green, and black flag, patrolled the Circassian guards of the court, their flamboyant uniforms bringing a touch of colour to the drab sunbaked streets. The Circassians wore long black skirted coats over Russian blouses, black fezzes, field boots, ammunition belts, revolvers and short swords. Sometimes a palace official in a flowing, belted white robe, his head-dress lashed with plaited goat hair, came out to speak to them. In a room of the palace Crown Prince Talal was a prisoner—his ambition to rouse the border tribes against the British having embarrassed his father.

Abdallah himself, immensely proud of his descent from the Prophet, is a bearded, merry-faced man of fifty-six. A glance at his face is sufficient to dispel the idea that he may leave his expensive luxuries for the leadership of desert nomads.

Surrounded by every time-killing gadget that the West can produce, he has the income of a millionaire, and spends most of it. His European clothes, with Arab head-dress, seemed to me to reflect his outlook. In one respect only is this graduate of the Sultan's academy adamant—he will not countenance any Jewish immigration. "I would rather live on the milk of my camels," he said, "than allow the Jews in my kingdom!"

In a journey that took me from pearly Damascus to the desert of the Hejaz, only 800 miles north of the Kaaba, I heard Arab, Jewish, and British case outlined with a monotonous sameness that sapped the spirit of compromise. That Jewish immigration has made the coastal plain blossom is as true as the fact of Arab difficulties.

Only under the British flag can these conflicting elements be harmonised, and there must be no suggestion of tampering with our control.

To do so would precipitate another holy war. Only Britain's armed strength can guide the Near and Middle East through its adolescence of civilisation.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

UNITED STATES: THE LEADERS

SAILING FROM SOUTHAMPTON ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, I found myself the only Englishman in my class on the German liner *Hansa* (the *Albert Ballin* of pre-Hitler days). At my table was Francisco Forzano, friend of Mussolini and head of a Californian citrus company. His optimism about the future of industry was reflected by those among the passengers who had taken American citizenship. They talked of the good times that were coming and the great recovery plans of the past four years. And though Nazi meetings were held amidships every day, I found no German willing to return to Europe in the event of war!

At New York I was met by several reporters, among them George Deer, once of Balliol and now a reporter for the *New York Evening News*. I was struck by the unanimity of their belief that European war was imminent, and that America must keep out at all costs. It was a viewpoint I found frequently in the days that followed.

My first call in New York was on Colonel House, once right-hand man of President Wilson and member of the Supreme War Council. Small, wrinkled, shrewd, he retained all the suavity and diplomatic skill of old. He advised me to see the leading members of the Cabinet in Washington before forming any judgments. When I returned from the western states I must call on him again, and he would explain his present attitude in greater detail. He left me in no doubt as to his critical attitude towards certain of the present trends of

administration. Colonel House has always been a "mystery man" to the American public, from the time when he was reputed to inspire the war declaration, and he is not, in my opinion, altogether averse to this reputation.

Before I left London the American Ambassador, Mr. Robert W. Bingham, impressed upon me the accessibility of leading public figures in his country, but the reality was still surprising, after my European experience. Thus in Belgrade there is a tacit agreement that visitors to Premier Stoyadinovitch should wait seven days for an audience, and so on. In America, I had interviewed the President, Vice-President Garner, and four of the chief Ministers within a week of arriving in Washington.

Vice-President Garner, a rugged, sixty-eight-year-old Texan, with a clean-shaven ruddy face and bushy white eyebrows, received me at the Senate House, where I found an indoor monorail train for the convenience of voters. After warning me to keep off political questions, he challenged me to "shoot" at him. Inevitably, we discussed political questions, and the type of men entering politics. Some of these, he said, were "educated, intellectual young men like you." I disclaimed this title, and he roared with delight. But he was at once wary when I turned to the collectivist plans of the Government, and told me to ask Roosevelt.

He would remain in office if required in 1940, he added, but intended to retire to his farm at Uvalde, which he described in glowing terms. He was very modest in discussing his own work. One important point he made was that he considered the average politician of to-day was of exactly the same type as before. As Garner was speaking with forty-six years of public life behind him, this seemed to settle the controversy on this question started by Cornelius Vanderbilt.

Garner asked me almost as many questions as I put to him, and showed that his dourness and abruptness, which have earned him the name of "Cactus Jack," were only two facets of a many-sided nature.

After this very informal talk, I promised not to quote

Garner in any political discussion in a way which might embarrass him. This precaution is obviously necessary, and is the cause of the President's ban on audiences.

I met Roosevelt, however, after a Press conference at the White House, through the co-operation of Mr. Ulric Bell, of the National Press Building. Through lines of armed police and detectives in mufti, I went through the Executive Building and was shown a big tarpon caught by the President on a fishing trip, which is mounted on the wall of the ante-room.

Then an inner door opened, and I entered the President's workroom. As I had expected, he was already seated at a big desk, before which I stood. On either side of him sat his advisers, secretaries, and stenographers, who transcribed every word uttered in the room to prevent mis-quotation.

Roosevelt's physical weakness makes walking a great strain, and he spends the greater part of his working day in his chair. But so far as output and energy are concerned he compares very favourably with most of his predecessors, and there is certainly no lack of driving power.

He has a very large head, a high forehead, dark hair, greying at the temples, and a pleasant smile and voice. He has a trick of shaking his head as he speaks, which lends weight to his remarks, and he always stares up into the face of his interlocutor. He wore a dark-blue lounge suit, a blue spotted tie, no waistcoat, and a white shirt, and smoked a cigarette through a holder.

As usual, he did most of the talking—some pressmen had warned me that this was a trick to avoid awkward questions, but I think that, like most politicians, he likes talking.

I was interested in Mr. Walter Runciman's visit, and wished to know if a French-British-U.S. economic conference was projected. I was thinking of a tariff and currency agreement. Roosevelt, however, denied that there was any such plan, and said that Runciman was coming only as a personal friend. This was most obvious fencing, of course, and I did not press the point.

Discussing the naval expansion programme, he laughed at the idea of naming the two new battleships *Maine* and *Vermont* (the only two of forty-eight states to vote Republican in 1936). Turning to a secretary, he said : " Would it be legal ? " but said : " Yes, it would," before hearing the reply.

He denied two Press stories that had been issued that morning, and talked more comfortably of millionaire Andrew Mellon's gift of nine million dollars' worth of pictures to the nation. His reputation for humour is well deserved, and some of his remarks were worthy of the high-paid radio commentators whose " wisecracks " are, of course, carefully prepared.

Roosevelt is fifty-five, and has been in politics since 1910. No man, least of all a lawyer, can retain all his illusions through such a training, and there is a good deal of conscious showmanship in Roosevelt's work.

I learned enough to know that he would never accept the old Supreme Court ban on his " New Deal." N.R.A. will go in other guises, and vast spending schemes and billion-dollar social legislation plans are being drawn up. That Roosevelt can do more than implement these schemes and work for peace in the next four years is doubtful.

And I was left in no doubt about his determination to maintain neutrality in the event of European war.

That President Roosevelt saved the federal and provincial banking system from disaster by his emergency measures in 1933 was obvious to all unbiased observers, but to-day the bankers are among the most clamorous of his opponents.

Secretary for the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, whom I interviewed in Washington, was hopeful of a better understanding, but bank and finance corporation executives I saw later made violent attacks on the Supreme Court reform plan and accused Roosevelt of " backdoor Bolshevism."

Feeling in the western states was even stronger than in Wall Street, and one Salt Lake City banker said :

" Roosevelt wants to get us all under his thumb—he's not bluffing us."

Under the recovery programme, banks and trust companies received two billion dollars in Treasury loans, and this help saved them from bankruptcy. Now that 80 per cent of this total has been repaid and financial confidence restored, the bankers are reverting to their former political and economic prejudices, and are indignant at Roosevelt's cynical criticisms of economists and " experts."

Increased taxation on corporation profits and the growing activities of the Government's Reconstruction Finance Corporation are the two chief targets, but the President's sympathetic attitude towards labour unions and his bold social experiments are alarming the bankers much more.

One Wall Street magnate, who voted Roosevelt in 1932, and is now ferociously anti-New Deal, told me that " Roosevelt is worse than a Red, because he masks himself in Democrat clothes." Like most of his colleagues, he had no wish to discuss the happenings of the famous " banking week-end " when Roosevelt was first elected, and the threats of a " banker massacre " made by farm area firebrands !

No fewer than 7,484 banks and trust companies were assisted by the recovery programme loans, and the strident opposition of their executives to Roosevelt seemed to me to be aggravated by the popularity of the President with the workers and the memory of their own hysterical appeals for help from the Government in 1932.

Although bankers are openly financing anti-New Deal propaganda and " lobbying," none of the Washington leaders use strong language about the " strangleho'd of finance " and " crucifying the workers on a cross of gold." This type of phraseology is the trade mark of Father Coughlin, Father Divine, Dr. Townsend, and other self-appointed " guides to the promised land," who are using every demagogic device to spread their colourful doctrines.

When I called at Father Coughlin's headquarters at Royal Oak, Michigan, I found that 120 girls were employed

in the basement of his £500,000 "Shrine," sorting out his correspondence and typing replies. His bi-weekly broadcasts are relayed all over the country, and he aims to enrol five million Americans in his League for Social Justice.

Like the bankers who once supported Roosevelt and now subscribe to Liberty League and Republican funds, many people assisted by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation are now critical of the regime.

Hundreds of thousands of home-buyers, in arrear with mortgage charges during the depression, would have been foreclosed upon but for Government help, but now that prosperity is again heralded, there is a demand for the old hire-purchase system.

The H.O.L.C., controlled by the Government, is now the world's biggest landlord, and naturally there have been cases in which the officials have been compelled to take legal action against borrowers. Nearly half of the home-buyers assisted are in arrear with their monthly payments, and in Illinois alone the debtors number more than 70,000.

But I found the rumours of harshness and "brutal evictions" were unjustified. Indeed, the Federal Bureaux seemed a great deal more studious of family welfare than any mortgage-holders I had met before.

The trouble is that while private mortgages are foreclosed without publicity, any action of the H.O.L.C. may involve a rush of reporters and demonstrators.

Here is an example: Charles Stern, a Chicago tradesman, was granted £1,120 by the H.O.L.C. in 1935, and agreed to repay £8 4s. a month. He was soon in hopeless arrear with his payments, and the Government foreclosed in June, 1936. But an agreement was made by which he was to occupy the top floor of his house, the rent obtained from letting the ground floor to be paid over to the Government.

Stern obtained £5 a month from his tenants, but paid nothing to the H.O.L.C. After this position had been maintained for eight months, the receiver, not unnaturally, took the case to court. This proceeding

was hailed as " another example of brutal Socialism," by Roosevelt opponents, and there was even talk of a demonstration outside the Stern house on North 18th Avenue !

The case was typical, and though there have doubtless been occasions on which mortgage-holders had genuine grievances, the records examined showed that the percentage of foreclosures by the Government was very much less than that by private companies.

Some pressmen attached to anti-Roosevelt papers also complained that under the new libel restrictions they were not allowed to write as freely as before, but this is hardly apparent from their articles, which maintain a steady and pungent offensive on the 1937 New Deal and its organisers.

The " exposures " of the private lives of statesmen are no longer featured, but this is probably due to ex-President Hoover, who disliked the blatancies of the frequent attacks on his friends.

Hoover, whom I interviewed in his Pullman car on the Los Angeles Flyer, refused to make any comment on this point. " *My* private life was always an open book," he said, but it is well-known that before his Presidential term no national figure was immune from criticism of a kind hardly imaginable in Europe. The slightest error made by a statesman in his youth might at any moment be " head-lined " with sensational photographs in certain journals, with a certain loss of prestige for the administration.

" Exposures," real and imagined, of social and business leaders continue, but the more flamboyant features of earlier sensationalism have been dropped.

Hoover was exceedingly strict in his attitude to the Press while he was President, and both he and many of his colleagues deplore certain aspects of U.S. " tabloid journalism." Roosevelt, however, welcomes publicity of all kinds, and his only stipulation to pressmen is that they shall not quote his " off the record " comments (in private talks) which might be misconstrued.

Former Roosevelt supporters now in opposition are not confined to the wealthy and respectable classes. A visiting psychologist's test of the political beliefs of prisoners in a Middle Western penitentiary revealed a strong anti-New Deal feeling, and this is not surprising, for the " G-Men " drive and the destruction of the first " racket rings " were, of course, personally inspired by the President.

A great deal of the opposition to Roosevelt is due to his dislike of old policies and his demand for a brand new approach to economics and social welfare. He is no believer in " playing safe at all costs." But when his erstwhile friends accuse him of " Bolshevism " he is entitled to laugh as heartily as do his newly-returned attachés from Moscow !

Postmaster-General James A. Farley, best-dressed American Cabinet Minister, ex-business man, and chief organiser of the Democratic Party, leaned back in his chair to consider my question. " No. I see no hope for the extreme Left elements in this country." He walked about the room, jerking terse sentences at me. " America is a country of individualists." He stressed the element of ambition in the mind of American youth. I told him he should know more about ambition than anyone in America and he frowned until I explained. I was thinking of the hundreds of place-seekers who besiege him daily with personal calls and telephone messages. Hundreds is no exaggeration, for I was shown the procedure adopted, when the caller list rises to two hundred a day, to speed the unwelcome and the loquacious.

Farley told me of his recent talks with political leaders in Europe, and left me in no doubt as to his plans and the future policy of the party. Hard, domineering, and ruthless, at forty-eight he is tipped by some journalists as a future President. Before I left he showed me a signed portrait Mussolini had given him in Rome.

His views about collectivism and radical parties in America were largely shared by Henry A. Wallace, Secretary for Agriculture, whom I met twice in Washington, and who is reputedly " closer " to Roosevelt than any other Minister, and by other Ministers I interviewed.

Wallace, sturdy, blue-eyed, pleasant-faced, is a fifty-five-years-old ex-editor, and an agricultural expert who is a newcomer to professional politics. We discussed U.S.S.R. agriculture, and agreed that collectivism was at least functioning, if rather rustily there, and also the Fascist Pontine Marshes schemes.

Regarding war possibilities, he was very pessimistic, but stressed the neutrality policy. " The war debts position would make a good anti-war point," he explained. " So that you will at least be paid in propaganda value? " I asked. He laughed and admitted this.

He still believes in private enterprise, certainly as regards U.S. farming, and was anti-Bolshevik. He had little respect for professional politicians. " I came into the administration, not because I am a politician," he said, " but because of the experimental approach of Roosevelt, which I welcomed." Wallace impressed me as the most honest and far-seeing of the American politicians I met.

But John L. Lewis, dictator of the C.I.O. (Committee for Industrial Organisation), has other ideas about the future of America's radical movement. Lewis, who is president of the strongest trade union in America and aspires to be the leader of thirty million workers, had cabled me in London asking me to call at his headquarters, and I lost no time in complying. When I arrived I found Lewis and his unions facing the huge General Motors Corporation in the most important strike dispute ever seen in the country.

My second talk with Lewis was interrupted by long-distance calls from his lieutenants in Akron and Detroit, and I obtained a useful insight into his organising

methods. Lewis, of Welsh descent, has spent the greater part of his fifty-six years in the trade union movement, but it is only in the last few months that he has become a national figure. To-day he is almost as well publicised in America as the President, and himself aspires to the leadership of a new third party which will elect him to power in 1940.

A massive, beetle-browed man with a domineering personality, Lewis offered me a cigar, lit one himself, and swung about in his chair as he talked of his vast plans for organising America's workers in the new industrial unions. I told him of William Green's remark to me that " the door is still open " for the return of the new unions to the American Federation of Labour. Green is president of the A.F. of L., and is undoubtedly alarmed at the rapid advance of the C.I.O., which had gathered about 1,800,000 workers in six months.

" Door," echoed Lewis, " I know nothing about any door." There was, he conceded, a place for the craft unions in industry, but he intended to go right ahead with his own plans for organising thirty million people. He explained his plans for the automobile, steel, concrete, and glass industries, and added that, no matter how the existing dispute ended, he would concentrate immediately on the steel trade.

When I asked him about resources, he admitted possession of large reserves conserved over a period of years, and showed me that he had now nearly 3,000 organisers at work throughout the country. Gleefully he pointed out that General Motors were losing a million dollars a day throughout the strike. He stressed the need for union recognition. " In England no Government would dare to abolish collective bargaining or ever question the principle? " I admitted this, and he went on. " Labour here is waking up, and these developments are inevitable." A political organisation would also inevitably emerge as the American workers gained self-confidence. He told me of his own early experiences in the mining areas.

He admitted paying $469,000 to the Roosevelt 1936 election funds, and followed with a striking admission. " None of the Presidential candidates had a policy for unemployment ! " I asked him about counter-methods against strike-breakers. " I am prepared to do *anything* I can to make the country fit to live in."

" With no reservations ? "

" No reservations."

Lewis was here implying that violence would be met with violence.

Americans are fond of extolling their democratic privileges, and the solid basis for their claims was brought home to me when I broadcast on the WHAM wave-length from Rochester. After being interviewed by reporters and cameramen in the public lounge of the Powers Hotel, I was led to the microphone and allowed half an hour to express my views without script, notes, or censor. After European experiences, this was certainly refreshing.

After another meeting in New York Town Hall, my sponsor, Mr. George Denny, asked me to stay a few days in order to meet Secretary for the Interior, Harold Ickes, who was to publicly debate his policy on the air with an opponent, and also answer unrehearsed questions relayed from another hall in Washington. The informal nature of these gatherings recalls the first " Town Meetings " of the founders of the Republic, and I found them wholly admirable.

American hospitality is rather overpowering, and at towns where I had meetings I usually found a number of automobiles available to " show me the district," and a round of visits arranged. Some of the meetings took a rather unusual form, such as one at the Hotel Astor in New York. Here I sat at the " Speakers' Table," which was raised high above, and facing, a thousand lunchers, at 250 tables. With me were Sir Gerald Campbell, the British Consul-General, Prince Hubertus von Loewenstein, Giuseppe Previtali, and Friedrich Aufhagen. We were closely observed at lunch

by the audience, and magnesium "guns" flashed at intervals. Aufhagen made a violent attack on British imperialism, and claimed the return of Germany's lost colonies. I was very much irritated by his speech, but in the debate and discussion which followed the audience left him in no doubt about its hostile attitude.

The popular belief that the Middle West is ill-informed about European affairs has little foundation, and I was surprised at the knowledge displayed by Illinois and Nebraska questioners. Everywhere the importance of democratic rights was strongly urged by local leaders. Nevertheless, full democracy as applicable in 1776 has its disadvantages to-day, and the appalling crime statistics are undoubtedly due in part to excessive legislative decentralisation, and the numerous "checks" on the district courts. Thus it is only within the last two years that the Federal Government has been given power of effectual intervention in major crimes, while the difficulties of securing swift and non-reversible convictions of gangsters and swindlers remain.

In Detroit there was a special problem—the Black Legion, which claims to have a membership of 300,000 and is similar in character to such bodies as the "American Gentiles," "The Knights of the Flaming Heart," and the "Purple Robe," stirring up racial hatred and religious intolerance.

So serious had the activities of this group become that Congressman Dickstein and other members of the House of Representatives had called for a Congressional Investigation Committee. Shortly before I arrived in Detroit to cover the strike situation several legionaries had been sentenced to the penitentiary for acts of violence. Yet everywhere there is a fear of imposing legislative bans and of strengthening the Federal Government—a fear which traces back to the school text-book teaching of the benefits of "pure" democracy.

Yet if General Washington and his lieutenants were alive to-day I am sure they would be the first to modernise the Constitution they hammered out after the Revolution.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

UNITED STATES: CRIME AS AN INDUSTRY

THE SHADOW OF A NEW CRIME WAVE DARKENS America, and in police headquarters at New York and Chicago I heard of the preparations that are being made to deal with the latest challenge to organised government. Cabinet leaders do not mince their words in dealing with this subject. Roosevelt said: "Crimes of organised banditry, cold-blooded shooting, lynching, and kidnapping have threatened our security." That he will give his full support to the work of the G-Men of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is certain, in spite of provincial opposition and criticism, for he added: "These violations of ethics and law call on the strong arm of government for their immediate suppression."

In Chicago Police Headquarters, Police Captain William H. Killeen gave me a résumé of the events of the last few years, which made the city notorious throughout the world for the prevalence of organised crime. "We have eliminated the gangster problem," he assured me, and he went on to say that Chicago's problems to-day were no worse than those of any other large American city. This is, unfortunately, true. I say "unfortunately" because Chicago's crime statistics show a disregard of law and order that would seem incredible in France or Britain.

Last year there were 243 murders in the city, and 9,505 robberies. Only two persons were sentenced to death for the murders, and only 40 per cent of the robbery cases were concluded by arrests—and it should

not be forgotten that arrests in Chicago are very frequently nullified within a few hours by astute lawyers. Other statistics of major crimes revealed the same tragic position. Thus there were no fewer than 17,426 burglaries in the city area. Even when criminals are brought to justice, jurors are afraid to convict, fearing gangster vengeance, and while I was in the city there were two notorious cases in which men with long " records " were given the benefit of the " doubt."

Police Chief Killeen said : " We are getting a better type of juror nowadays," and he thought that many of the worst features of the old days were rapidly disappearing. But in the first week I spent in the city there were four murders, and several " stick-ups " of prominent citizens.

In the old Four Deuces club, once headquarters of Al Capone and scene of twelve unsolved murders, I met a former lieutenant of the gangster chief, who is now serving a long sentence in Alcatraz Penitentiary. " Al was never as bad as they made out," he told me—and here he was unconsciously confirming what I had heard at Police Headquarters in State Street. He talked with something like enthusiasm of the old days, when the Genna brothers ruled Chicago with an iron hand. Of the six Gennas, five had died at the hands of rival gangsters, and the sole survivor had fled to his native Italy in search of obscurity. John Scalice and Alberto Anselmi, " ace gunners " of the execution squads, had met violent ends, and the blustering cowboy " Two Gun Louis " Alterie, was now living peacefully on a Colorado ranch. Hymie Weiss, inventor of the execution ceremonial known as " taking him for a ride " had vanished, as had Maxie Eisen, " Dean of the Racketeers," who once extorted blackmail from every street hawker in the area.

Capone's old landlady had no criticism to make of her notorious tenant. " There were lots of worse fellers than Capone in this town," she said. " Some of them that was chasing him should have gone to gaol." This

was a typical attitude in Chicago, where the children play with toy machine-guns and look on " Public Enemies " as heroes.

Chicago is by no means unique in these respects, and is actually surpassed by the nation's capital so far as recent hold-ups are concerned. In my first two days in Washington there were four armed robberies in broad daylight, and one shopkeeper told me that the employers' association was considering the organisation of special defence squads to reinforce the police.

So long as weapons can be obtained as easily as at present, there seems little hope of effective preventive measures. Anyone who obtains a reference from an unconvicted citizen can now openly buy a revolver for £7, while in New York's Bowery I learned of the large illicit trade in machine- and sawed-off shot-guns.

Many of the gangsters convicted during the 1931 disturbances have been released, and they are turning their attention to " rackets "—ingenious methods of extorting money from shopkeepers and citizens. This development is due, according to what I was told by Edgar P. Hoover's assistant in Washington, to the avoidance of federal law-breaking following the G-Men drive. Hoover, chief of the G-Men, has been foremost in demanding legal reform that will strengthen the hands of the administration, but his work is seriously hindered by the jealousy and passive attitude of various State police departments.

The first trades to be attacked by the racketeers were the food and distribution organisations. Laundries, barber-shops, butchers' shops, and greengroceries were the next objectives. The usual method employed by the ex-gunmen is the organisation of a " union " or " association," which is registered in official records in the ordinary way. Shopkeepers are then approached to join the organisation, various methods of " persuasion " being used. Thus in New York cafeteria-owners were told that if they refused to pay the racket " levies "—which vary according to the size of the

business—they would be subjected to "treatment." This was no idle threat, for men opposing the racketeers were beaten up on their way home, and their shops invaded by "drunks," who insulted customers, made short-change allegations, and staged fights and disorder. If payments were still withheld after "treatment," shops were attacked by gangs of men armed with stink-bombs and blackjacks. Several shopkeepers I saw told me that they found it cheaper to pay the "levies" than to hold out against oppression.

Prominent politicians have been accused of accepting "rake-offs" from racketeer leaders for protection, and these charges are too detailed and too frequent to be without foundation. In New York, in fact, Tammany participation in some of the semi-legal rackets is openly admitted. The semi-legal rackets are chiefly concerned with usury, and dozens of apparently normal "money-lenders" are really agents for the new crime associations. Borrowers who fall behind with their payments are threatened with violence and denunciation to their employers, and these threats are carried out promptly if opposition is shown. Another favourite racket is the "garnishee" system. In loan contracts a clause is inserted stating that in the event of a single payment being missed a percentage of the borrower's wages can be claimed by the lender. This is legal, according to United States law, but when it is remembered that many trust companies and local authorities have a rule of instant dismissal for employees involved in garnishments, the new practice can only be regarded as a form of blackmail. Similar threats are employed to justify illegal increases in interest charges by the bogus money-lenders. Some idea of the extent of these operations can be gauged from the fact that £700,000 has been extracted from municipal workers in New York alone during the last few years, while in Chicago one of every six workers in business offices is involved in garnishee transactions, while other towns such as Birmingham, Alabama, are in a worse position.

New attacks on the furniture, clothing, and jewellery trades are now being made by racketeers, who have reaped rich rewards in recent months, and business executives are spending large sums in investigating these activities in an effort to avert further extortions.

Another profitable field for the new criminals is the organisation of pseudo-patriotic societies, which engage in anti-social and terroristic activities. Members are bound by secret oaths to do their " duty," and political and racial propaganda is used as a cloak for various forms of robbery and blackmail. " Black Legion " activities have been curtailed following recent trials, but other bodies are as active as ever, especially in the southern states.

In Detroit, where a film was being shown depicting Black Legion activities, one business man who has had experience of the gangs told me that the leaders were only waiting for the present storm to subside before recommencing blackmail and violence threats. " They are just hoodlums," he said, " most of them have gaol records, and this political stuff gets them a better break with juries if they do get landed with anything." This view was confirmed by other industrialists in the city. Congressman Dickstein, who is leading the demands for exposure at great personal risk, said : " These activities constitute a real menace. The Federal Government should unmask these cowardly, vicious, and illegal organisations." He had, he added, unquestionable documentary proof and affidavits in his possession to support his statements, which have the approval of many other members of the House of Representatives.

The " Silver Shirts " and the " Paul Revere " groups have also been accused of participation in illegal adventures. From what I heard from mayors and business leaders in the Middle West ex-gangsters are among the leaders of the secret societies responsible for the recent outbreaks of terrorism.

At the Federal Bureau of Investigation I found 203

university graduates sorting finger-prints in the record office. A departmental chief told me that the Bureau has records of no fewer than 250,000 professional criminals—a sufficient admission. Altogether seven million finger-print cards are indexed, and new cards from arrested men are coming in at the rate of 4,300 a day for registration or identification. Federal police officials believe that only compulsory finger-printing of the entire population—preferably in the schools—can solve America's crime problem, and I heard strong criticism of the parole board system, which was started a few years ago by humanitarians who believed that crime should be treated as a proof of mental illness, and not as an offence against society. That thousands of criminals have been released on the American public after completing only a tenth of their original sentences is undeniable, and the ease with which unscrupulous lawyers can secure pardons and " report-paroles " in many states is notorious.

Many notorious criminals have records which demonstrate better than any statistics the anomalies of this system. Thus Capone had been arrested twelve times, sometimes on murder charges, before he was finally sentenced for defrauding the income tax authorities! J. Fiorenza, convicted of the Titterton " bathtub " murder, had been arrested seven times, but only convicted twice. Chapman, the English-born murderer, who is still spoken of in America as the " No. 1 Bad Man of the Century," was arrested eight times before his true character was revealed, although he had been involved in several mail robberies, gaol escapes and armed bank-hold-ups. Several men convicted of murder in recent weeks were found to be out on parole from previous sentences, while no fewer than 218 persons convicted of major crimes were placed on parole by the Chicago Criminal Court in 1936.

One of these parolees, Edward Filipiak, was admitted to probation after having been sentenced to two years imprisonment for motor car theft. Altogether he spent

less than four months in gaol, and he had not been long at large when he was again arrested for a similar offence. He was released on promising to report to police officials at regular intervals—this in spite of the fact that he had also been found guilty of participation in an armed hold-up in 1936! Filipiak's case is typical of many, and, indeed, less sensational than other records on the parole files. A prominent Illinois attorney, with whom I discussed this question, said : " Sure, it's easy to beat the rap if you know how. Some of the big-money boys in the old days could get away with murder ! "

Murderers in America have a 50 per cent chance of never coming to trial, a 70 per cent chance of escaping conviction, and a 90 per cent chance of not receiving a severer sentence than five years in the penitentiary—these are the astonishing facts revealed in an analysis of the nation's crime statistics, which show the flaws in the legal system.

Government officials employed in active anti-vice work were not very optimistic about the future. They doubted if prohibition was responsible for the crime wave, but believed that the contempt for law and the familiarity of the public with illegal activities dated from the Volstead Act. But the chief cause of America's subjection to criminal epidemics was, they thought, the organisation of vice as an industry. Over and over again I was assured that American crime was a highly-organised industry, employing tens of thousands of " professionals," who use every available machine-device and scientific aid in their work.

One G-man in Buffalo said : " Your Scotland Yard men can hardly believe their eyes when they come over here to study conditions. They all say it would be impossible in England, but if you had our mixed population and wandering hoodlums I wonder what things would be like ? Don't forget, you've only got amateur crooks on the other side."

An aroused public opinion could do much to restore law and order in America. In pioneer days bands of

" Vigilantes " dealt summary justice to notorious law-breakers, and the republic would be well served by a revival of that spirit, for there is every evidence that the racketeer is replacing the armed gangster as a national menace.

Motoring from Chicago to Cairo, Illinois, with a flood relief squad, I stopped at a suburban cross roads, as a young man in a khaki overcoat " thumbed " me for a lift. I told him we were heading for the flood belt, but he was undismayed, and packed himself with difficulty into the rear seat.

" I don't care where you're going, as long as it's out of here," he opened, and long before we reached Evansville he had told us his story.

Still in the early twenties, he was a professional hobo and had made several coast-to-coast trips. He showed me his " Hobo Union " card. No dues are payable, but entrants must be recommended by members, and a yearly " convention " is held, at which funds are collected and a " Hobo King " nominated.

Daniel O'Brien, present chief of America's tramps, even has a political programme, which, as might be expected, is largely concerned with relief, pension, and transport questions.

O'Brien, who has not worked for 35 years, is a strange character—a man of education and a vigorous defender of his " profession " in letters to the Press. I met several of his lieutenants in New York, where they hold meetings in Union Square, and I was shown a copy of their newspaper—the " Hobo News "—which is printed on yellow paper, maintains contact between members, and provides freight-train and " hand-out " tips.

America has tens of thousands of tramps, many of them youngsters in search of adventure. As a rule they are seasonal workers, in spite of their frequent diatribes against earning a living. They know the signing-on days at the fruit and hop-fields, the railway depôts, and the lumber camps, and study the special opportunities of each state.

Freight trains, motor cars, and lorries provide the normal means of transport, for American highways are unsuitable for pedestrian tramps, to say nothing of the enormous distances to be covered. Young Americans in the eastern states are to-day, as yesterday, " going west " in search of experience, while in distant states the glamour of the great Atlantic coast cities proves a powerful magnet.

There is more parental opposition, however, than in the old days, for the dangers of " gaol farms " and association with criminal gangs are widely publicised.

The C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps) has also had an effect upon the attitude of parents. About 300,000 men between the ages of 18 and 28 are enlisted in this body, which provides work, food, and lodgings for eight-months' periods. Members are paid £6 a month, and of this £5 must be sent home to parents or relatives. The camps are very well run, and those I visited in Illinois and Maryland were models of efficiency, occupied with valuable drainage, afforestation, and dam-building projects.

C.C.C. directors I saw in Washington told me that they were out to " clean up " the hobo situation, and they aim at eventually enlisting the whole of America's jobless youth in the corps. Their statistics of educational and physical improvement were certainly impressive, and bore out my own observations.

But in the southern states, where millions of cotton " share-croppers " exist on sub-standard wages, and rarely handle cash owing to their indebtedness at " company stores," there is little to hold young men to their homes. There are, besides, 9,000,000 unemployed and 2,200,000 workers on Government relief jobs.

In an Omaha club I talked with a young New Yorker about his plans. He was heading for California, and was hoping to board a train that night.

" You can get 24 dollars a day on the fishing boats at Santa Barbara," he said, " and even if I don't land a

job I'll be better off in the sun than keeping the sidewalks down at home."

He was not a hobo, according to O'Brien's standard. O'Brien and his lieutenant, Gus Schaefer, would have called the youngster a " scenery bum ! "

Jack London and Jack Dempsey were at one time hobos, and Dempsey rode freight cars all over the Union. The ex-heavyweight champion, who invited me to lunch at his fashionable restaurant in New York, had his worries.

While the racketeers were afraid to interfere with him, the control of employment was being tightened up. He was not allowed to discharge a man when he liked, and if he wanted good English-speaking American citizens he was not allowed a free hand in selecting them.

Mickey Walker, the ex-middleweight champion of the world, whom I met in a Broadway restaurant, confirmed the glories of continual racketeer activity. Walker, pleasant, intelligent, and modest, complained of the social snobbery of New York's " exclusive set." " When I played golf with the Duke of Windsor in Paris," he said, " he treated me as a man, and there was no suspicion of condescension anywhere. He is a fine fellow. But some of these Park Avenue people shut out anybody who has risen from the ranks. They are the worst of snobs."

I found that my own tramping experience in England would be of little use in America, where an entirely different " technique " is employed.

" Panhandlers," or professional beggars, are found everywhere to-day, and in the worse-lit quarters of big cities, well-dressed pedestrians are almost certain to be accosted several times an hour.

Nor are the beggars modest or unctuous in their demands. " Spare a nickel for a cup of coffee, brother ? " or " Can you help a war veteran who's in a jam ? "— these are typical approaches.

Housewives in suburban and rural districts are continually plagued by callers looking for " hand-outs,"

and this problem has grown so acute since depression days that dogs and notices now appear where before there was always a kindly welcome for the wanderer.

Conditions are better in the western states, where the pioneer traditions are still strong, and " transients " can always raise a meal. Coffee-house and cafeteria managers, now plagued by " dummy union " racketeers and won't-take-no salesmen are, however, much less friendly to the hobo than before.

All things considered, the task of " thumbing " one's way or riding freight cars across the continent is more difficult than ever. State laws have also been tightened up, and wandering vagrants are frequently sentenced to six-months terms on a gaol farm, where they work without pay to provide fruit and vegetables for the county gaol and hospital.

Motorists are also more chary about providing " lifts," but there is no danger of a tramp being compelled to walk very far, unless he is stranded in such states as Colorado or Arizona, where sometimes there is a 200-mile run between filling stations.

At 214, The Bowery, New York, the hoboes run a " college " where tramp entertainments are staged, and a restaurant which claims to serve " food, not slumgullion, 24 hours a day." The college is run by Ralph Dalten, who is better known as " The Bowery Prince."

Few hoboes to-day travel on passenger trains, which " ride too high " and provide poor accommodation for " jumpers."

Needless to say, there are few women tramps in America, for conditions are much too hard, and though thousands of girls run away from home every year, it is only on rare occasions that a motorist is " thumbed " by one of them.

In New York's Bowery—sometimes called " The Street of Forgotten Men "—I visited various hobo doss-houses, and the huge Municipal Lodging House, where roadsters from as far distant as San Francisco, New

Orleans and El Paso were gathered, comparing experiences.

Plans for a mass emigration to Florida, where a big " millionaire season " was reported, were discussed, and I was asked if I would join one of the train teams.

Many of the professional " bums " have criminal records, and it is not surprising that well-to-do parents no longer approve round-trip adventures for their sons.

Hobo life has its romantic side, but rubbing shoulders with drug-addicts, ex-gangsters and young hoodlums is the other side of the medal. Yet it is only fair to say that many thousands of decent young fellows are to-day moving from state to state in search of a job, unwilling to return penniless to hard-hit homes.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

UNITED STATES: THE INDUSTRIAL BATTLEFIELD

WILLIAM GREEN, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN Federation of Labour, denied stories of a "feud" between himself and John L. Lewis, whose Unions were expelled from the A.F. of L. last year. Nevertheless, Green and his supporters have announced a nation-wide drive against Lewis and the C.I.O., beginning by suspending from the important Cleveland Federation of Labour all Unions that are C.I.O. affiliates.

Membership is growing rapidly in the C.I.O. Unions, while the A.F. of L. membership is dwindling, some reports placing it below the 2,000,000 mark.

Green, pleasant-faced, middle-aged, and spectacled, admitted the astonishing upsurge of political activity among the workers.

That this was no exaggeration was proved to me when I visited the strike areas in Michigan and Illinois. The sweeping social and economic reforms made by the first Roosevelt administration brought the "forgotten man" into prominence for the first time, and he is determined to fight for his place in the sun.

One of my first sights in New York was a line of pickets outside Pier 86, their banners inscribed with strike slogans. One collector thrust his box at me: "Help feed the pickets, brother, you can't go wrong." In his lapel was the familiar hammer and sickle badge.

In Washington I watched a demonstration of "striking

seamen" converging on the Capitol. Paul Scharrenberg, editor of the American *Seaman's Journal*, and a responsible trade union leader, told me that many of the men in the procession had never been to sea in their lives, and this was confirmed by a "section leader" from Baltimore, who described his experiences to me in the Federal Auditorium. "They told me I was a delegate," he said, "and that was all right. But they've got tailor's runners, bums from the flop-houses, and all kinds of set-ups in this outfit!"

Scharrenberg told me that the new strike wave was being deliberately engineered by Communist agents in an endeavour to smash the established unions and organise new Bolshevik-led formations. His list of Communist agents in the west coast maritime strike included the names of several men whom I had met in South Shields and Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1931, when they were trying to smash the British Seamen's Union. The leader of the Pacific coast strike, Harry Bridges, is an Australian, and three of his best friends are the U.S. Communist leaders Darcy, Browder, and Foster. Earl Browder was the Communist candidate at the last Presidential election, and the variety of newspapers and magazines published by the American Communist Party shows the extent of the financial backing available.

In Baltimore I saw an example of the unscrupulous methods used by the Communist agents in order to gain publicity and sympathy for their work. Every ship arriving for discharge was proclaimed "tied up" and the crew added to the number of "strikers." Actually, the men were only ashore awaiting orders, and discharging and loading operations went on unhampered. Reporters visiting "strike headquarters" were introduced to "strike leaders," who claimed to be boatswains and quartermasters off vessels in the harbour. A sailor would, of course, have stripped their pretensions away with a few questions, but as it was many of their sensational stories were printed, and company and shipmaster denials were often too late to repair the damage.

At the S. Nicholas Arena in New York's Bronx, I attended a welcome demonstration organised for Tim Buck, General Secretary of the Canadian Communist Party, who had just returned from Spain, and who claimed gleefully that Communists were taking the lead in the Spanish Government's operations, and he asked for support for arms and stores. Five thousand dollars was raised at this meeting and the *Internationale* was sung as New York's Communists stood with clenched fists.

A number of Russian women were present at this meeting, selling photogravure booklets and (expensively-printed) cheap pamphlets on the Five Year Plans. I said to one of them : " You're a Russian, and you know this stuff you're selling isn't true." She replied : " It's not a question of what's true—there's a war on, and we've got to use all the weapons we've got." Russian Jews who now head New York's Communist parties confirmed this opinion. They, of course, are perfectly well aware that the propaganda claiming Russian standards of life to be superior to those of America is simply barefaced untruth, but they must carry out the orders of the men financing their work.

One of the most striking features of the new Communist drive in America is the amount of money available for the Red agents, who appear at their expensively-furnished offices in high-powered Packards and Lincolns. The demonstrations which are being organised every week in industrial areas cost thousands of dollars in train fares and bus charges, and there is also petrol allowance for men owning motor cars. The San Francisco strike on the waterfront was the most illuminating example of this trend, for police officials told me their estimate of trouble-makers and professional " hoodlums " on the Red pay-roll was over 200 ! " Strike newspapers " and coloured printed posters were issued daily at the Communist offices to all-comers, and there was even a " Press bureau," run by a disbarred lawyer, in another town.

That few American seamen had any connection with

the much-boomed strike was revealed when Scharrenberg and federal officials in Washington challenged Bridges to produce his statement of membership and finances.

The latest Communist attack is concentrating on the steel and automobile industries. John L. Lewis denied any Communist sympathies when I interviewed him, but it is obvious that in many of the new strikes Communist agents are taking the lead. In Detroit during the General Motors strike, which affected 135,000 men and cost a million dollars a day, I heard foremen complaining that Red agents had obtained jobs in various plants shortly before the trouble started. At Flint, Michigan, which was patrolled by soldiers in steel helmets and city " Vigilantes," I found Red agents were laying up stores of weapons for use in " emergency." Black-jacks, sandbags, acid-canisters, life-preservers, and rubber " persuaders " were available in Fisher Plant 1 and Chevrolet Plant 4, while many of the Communist sympathisers were armed with revolvers and carbines. Only the tact of young Governor Murphy avoided serious bloodshed, and Police Chief James V. Wills talked of " another massacre."

Yet it was only by a narrow margin that catastrophe was averted. There were 39 casualties in strike disorders, and I found 4,000 National Guards in a big camp, with thousands of supporting " Vigilantes " patrolling the streets every night, while the womenfolk and men friends of the strikers kept warm at huge street bonfires, waiting to relieve the pickets.

After watching the strike sympathisers and window-smashers being cleared off the plants with tear-gas bombs and fire-hoses, I had a narrow escape from arrest when I tried to enter the Chevrolet plant, in spite of my union and military passes. James Tripp, of the *Chicago Times*, and Michael Maloney, of the *United Press*, just ahead of me, were arrested by the military and taken to regimental headquarters. Two reporters of the *Detroit News* were also arrested, and I chose another method of entry.

Inside, I found the bearded strikers cheerful, but dirty—soap supplies had almost vanished.

They told me that if the soldiers tried to storm the factories they would open fire, and some of the improvised defences certainly looked effective. "Persuaders" were being manufactured from car upholstery and rubber tubing.

Union victories at Detroit and in the seamen's strike had only whetted the appetite of the labour organisers. Alfred P. Sloan, President of the three hundred million pounds General Motors Corporation, said: "No union dictator will dominate G.M. plants," and his Vice-President, William S. Knudsen, added: "I pride myself on raising my men first," but eventually they were compelled to yield certain of the union demands.

Industrial espionage and organised strike-breaking are not confined to the United States, but nowhere else are they so largely supported and financed by big business. Labour sympathisers all over the world will rejoice that one of the largest factory espionage organisations in America, Corporations Auxiliary, Inc., has been forced out of business as a result of the recent Senatorial Investigation. In investigation testimony it was revealed that the corporation's income averaged between £60,000 and £100,000 per annum, and this money was solely derived from underground spying on labour organisational activities.

John L. Lewis had told me that he expected a new strike breaking drive this year, and added that wealthy and unscrupulous corporation executives, who oppose his trade union drive, were already making plans for a large-scale attack, with the help of an army of "finks" and "boots." "Finks" are shiftless unemployed men—petty thieves, paroled convicts, or youths willing to take any work in desperation. "Boots" are the men detailed for spying on union leaders or "trouble-makers" in a factory. During the sit-down strikes in Michigan and Illinois during the earlier part of the year it was

openly admitted by the employers that detectives from the Pinkerton and other agencies were engaged in espionage work, but the subsidising of "finks" was carefully concealed from the public, although they were discovered in every striking plant which staged a "showdown."

In a different category are the "guards" employed by the strike breaking firm, whose agents make regular calls on all important business leaders. The "guards" are powerfully built men, most of whom have seen service in the armed forces or the National Guard. They must be non-unionists, and they are given frequent lectures on the "subversive" aims of trade unions. If they are satisfactory in this respect, their employers are not too inquisitive about their previous records, and it is well known that many of these men were employed during prohibition days as bodyguards to wealthy gang leaders. Only the "guards" are paid a retainer by the strike breaking firms, as the "finks" can be recruited at short notice from the ten-cent "flop-houses" and municipal lodging halls.

Chicago's biggest "flop-house" is a favourite gathering place for "finks," and I found nearly 1200 men of all ages in the "bull pen," where they spend most of their time. The "bull pen" is a long room in the basement, and the only light comes from two electric light bulbs. A long trough running along one side of the room was used for washing, and most of the men were ragged and verminous. The "panhandlers" (beggars) and professional "bums" were surrounded by squads of cigarette-hunters as soon as they entered the door, and at the other end of the room an old man was doing a brisk trade with "derail"—denatured alcohol, sold at twopence a bottle. There are 15,000 such men in Chicago's "flop-houses," and it is from such reservoirs that the strike breakers supply their unscrupulous clients.

An industrialist, threatened with a strike or serious dispute about conditions, rings up the strike breaking firm—there are agencies in 200 big towns—and asks

for an agent to be sent round, so that a plan of campaign can be worked out. If the plant involved employs several thousand men, " finks "will be signed on in each shop to spy on their workmates, and staff agents of the strike breakers from another district will be ordered to report on all key union leaders, and spread anti-union propaganda in the works. In extreme cases overtures will be made to the union leader to accept bribes or promotion in another plant. If these measures fail and negotiations break down, lorry-loads of " finks " and " guards " are rushed to the plant as soon as a strike is declared. Naturally, many of the " finks " have had little or no technical training, and could not possibly maintain production in a plant employing skilled labour. No matter—their task is simply to put up a great show of activity with the object of causing splits among the strikers. The " guards " have two functions—first to protect the " finks " from violence, and secondly, to encourage and provoke violence outside the plant, so that the military or militia will be called in and newspaper sympathy obtained. One or two " guards " will organise a public meeting in a local hotel for the purpose of enlisting " Vigilantes," who are always led by some aspiring politician or civic official.

The " sit-down " tactics employed in recent strikes have put a period to some of these methods, but the agencies have not been slow to adjust themselves. Thus the Sherman Corporation, one of the major agencies, now claims to specialise in " strike prevention," and in its letters to business men, says : " We send representatives into the plant who point out to the workers what the teaching of the radical agitator, socialist, or whatever you want to call them, will bring them to."

The Pinkerton Detective Agency denies encouraging violence, but boldly claims to be the most efficient espionage bureau in the country. The Pinkerton offices are found in every big city, and the Burns Detective Agency, which has special " industrial and political departments," also covers the unions. These are only

two of the biggest firms, and there are 60 others operating in New York State alone. How considerable their operations are may be gauged from the fact that one big motor firm paid Corporations Auxiliary over £13,000 a year for several years, according to the evidence given to the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee !

The Senatorial investigation into the American munitions industry revealed that one munition firm, Federal Laboratories, Inc., sold over £20,000 worth of tear gas and other products during the recent San Francisco and Pittsburgh strikes. This was the same firm which showed extraordinary activity during the political troubles in Cuba and the South American republics, and it is significant that it is affiliated with one of the most important " industrial investigation " companies in the country.

Strike breaking and the provocation of acts of violence have for long been normal features of American industrial life, and every year thirty to forty people are killed in labour disputes. The leaders of the new industrial unions expect fresh attacks in the near future, and are already combing their ranks for spies and traitors. Under American law there is apparently no way of suppressing " finks " and " guards," and, indeed, until recently these men were supported by the heads of the state. Yet it is obvious to all unbiased observers that the abolition of strike breaking would not only promote industrial peace and cross-table collective bargaining, but would also prove much less costly to big business than the present subsidies to outside agencies. I discussed this question with members of the Omaha Business Men's Club, and one of them—a leading Middle West industrialist—said : " We don't want to pay strike breakers, but we hate the idea of a union pointing a pistol at us, and we've been trained to believe in individualism." But the majority of his colleagues took a more realistic view, and forecasted a general acceptance of union-employer negotiations. One said :

"We know something about strike breakers here—the last time they were called in the town was under martial law!"

But in spite of the changing attitude of employers towards labour problems, the strike breaking industry will continue to flourish in America, so long as the big corporation subsidies are available, and so long as the "finks," "guards," and "hunger-scabs" are treated as being on the right side of the law. A new social outlook is already observable in America, and when it is manifested in progressive industrial legislation—which is already planned—the army of labour spies will be compelled to turn their energies into socially useful activity.

America is "on her way"—and though the immediate future is troubled, the new schemes will undoubtedly open a new chapter in social and economic progress. One striking fact emerges—the old "rugged individualism" and the philosophy of devil take the hindmost" are dead, and America's young people are unanimously rejecting the hard materialism of yesterday.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CANADA

THE SEVERITY OF THE POST-1931 DEPRESSION IN Canada was little appreciated in Europe, but some idea of its harshness can be gathered from the fact that even to-day there are one and a half million people on the relief rolls out of a population of ten and a half millions. Most people know something about the bleakness of the Canadian winter, but in the summer conditions on the western plains are often comparable with those found in the Arabian desert. June temperatures may exceed 100 degrees in the shade, and dense clouds of dust sweep the surface of the land as the farmers sow their crops. If rain falls all is well, but the seven years of drought is still unbroken, and thousands of farmers have sold nothing since 1932, when they gathered half a crop.

In 1931 the repercussions of the Wall Street crash and European troubles seriously affected Canadian agriculture, while there was large-scale unemployment in the eastern provinces. In 1932 currency fluctuations abroad and new tariff barriers made inroads into the export totals, and cereal prices crashed. Wheat fell to 38½ cents per bushel, and the farmers were faced with bankruptcy. Many growers found that after paying freight, handling, and insurance charges on their consignments, they had nothing to draw at the banks which arranged sales! Huge stacks of barley were dumped into the Great Lakes when prices fell below freightage, and Pacific coast farmers used their stocks for hog-feeding or fuel. The plight of hundreds of immigrants was pitiful, for they had gone to the Dominion

from Britain full of hope and ambition, resolved to make good. After months of back-breaking toil, the men who had obtained Government land grants found that they had not enough cash for seed, while conditions in their new " depressed area " were in some respects worse than anything seen in Durham or South Wales. With thousands of farmers and farm workers, whose meagre savings were exhausted, they applied for relief, and the pressure on the improvised bureaux was so severe that western state budgets soon showed serious deficits. Cash grants were suspended, and the " scrip " system of food and fuel vouchers introduced.

With rising European tariffs against Canadian goods, matters went from bad to worse, and the plague of grasshoppers which destroyed the meagre crops of 1933 seemed a final blow. Pessimists talked of a return to a pioneer economy, and barter trade was actually developed in parts of Alberta. The cattle and sheep grew lean, and with the reduction of dairy produce and lack of meadow grass farmers were compelled to reduce stock to a minimum. But here again they were in difficulties, for prices fell to one-half and three-fourths of a cent live-weight, and steers weighing 9 cwts. were knocked down for twenty shillings. Tax arrears piled up, and landlords were unable to obtain their rents from moneyless tenants. The streets of the western towns and villages were thronged with crowds of unemployed, and squads of extremist agitators from abroad landed at west coast ports to " organise the depression." In some areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan nine men out of ten were on the relief lists, and despair seemed inevitable when pioneers who had spent their lives in developing farms pawned their last valuables to maintain themselves and their animals.

It was here, at the pit of the depression, that the sterling spirit of the Dominion showed itself best. Thousands of truckloads of vegetables and other necessaries were rushed to the hard-hit areas from the more prosperous north and east, and there was no

grumbling at the new Federal taxation imposed to help the provincial budgets. Hundreds of churches, clubs, and social organisations held meetings to raise supplies, and wealthy people volunteered their services in the relief bureaux, working twelve and fourteen hours a day in relieving necessity, without pay. Free transport was arranged for semi-starved horses, which were fed in the north, and hundreds of loads of straw and feed-grain were despatched to farmers who remained at work in the hope of rain.

Few of the immigrants talked of returning to England empty-handed, and most of those who left the western towns returned within a few months. School teachers, whose salaries were progressively reduced until many of them (with university degrees) were earning about sixty pounds a year, refused to leave their posts, and survived through odd jobs performed after school hours. The agitators were given short shrift in most areas, and those who indulged in secessionist propaganda had cause to regret it. Mr. James Gardiner, the Minister of Agriculture, who was Premier of Saskatchewan through the worst years, told me that only on one occasion was there a challenge to public order, which he met promptly by deporting the agitators responsible.

Church attendance did not suffer, and there was evidence of a return to Christian habits of thought, which had been threatened during the post-war boom years.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell, an English-born Saskatchewan school teacher, who has recently been elected to Parliament, gave me a graphic picture of conditions in his area. All classes, he said, had joined forces in the struggle against poverty, and social distinctions were overridden in the communal effort. The life led by many professional workers, he added, would have sounded incredible in Britain. Immigrants from Britain confirmed his statements. One Londoner said : " There was no pleasure of any kind where we were, and we were snowed in half the year, but we couldn't walk out on the job once we'd said we'd tackle it."

Tackle it they did, and to-day Canada is reaping the reward of that grim struggle. Agricultural prospects are better than ever before, and the west is receiving its share of the astonishing recovery drive in the east and north, as is demonstrated by the dwindling unemployment figures. The new gold and oil finds are of great importance, and north of Montreal I find myself in an apparently endless stream of prospectors and tradesmen, heading for the new townships that are springing up around the shafts and bores. Engineering experts on the fields assured me that according to present yields Canada would soon be the first gold-producing nation in the world, and the rush of foreign capital is significant. Wages are rising throughout the Dominion, and from Finance Minister Charles Dunning I heard that a balanced Federal budget is already in sight. A great deal is hoped for from the new trade agreement with Britain, and ex-Premier R. B. Bennett told me of his hopes for a new immigration scheme, which would avoid the errors of earlier years.

The new Home Improvement Plan of the Government has caused a boom in the lighting, building, plumbing and decorating trades, and many of its features might well be copied elsewhere. Under the plan, any owner of a farm, house, apartment or flat, whether mortgaged or not, can borrow up to four hundred pounds at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent from the local bank, which co-operates with the Government department through its head office. The only provision that must be satisfied is " good credit standing "—which means, according to the Minister— " a reputation for paying bills promptly." No endorser of the promissory notes is required, and there is no discrimination against people who do not possess a banking account. Many municipalities are co-operating with the plan by not assessing the improvements for taxation. New roofing, furnace, bathroom and kitchen renovations ; new garages and floors ; painting and interior decorating ; and modernised lighting, heating, and plumbing, are the most popular improvements,

and farm-dwellings are interpreted to include barns, outbuildings and fences. Thousands of men have been absorbed into industry by this scheme, which has the unusual merit of simplicity, and I heard high praise of its operations from women of all classes.

Agricultural wages for the Dominion average thirty shillings a week (including board), and this marks a two shilling increase on the 1935 figures. There are still considerable differences between provinces, however, and in British Columbia, during the summer season, men earn between nine and ten pounds a month.

In industry the average working week is 44 hours, and the paucity of strikes is a tribute to the progressive policy of the employers, and the skilful handling of arbitration by Mr. Norman Rogers, the Minister of Labour. Mr. Rogers told me that he was planning a national unemployment insurance scheme for the Dominion, which he believed to be very necessary, and declared himself an apostle of collective bargaining. Labourers in most provinces average £3 10s. per week, and many skilled workers receive between six and seven pounds a week. Sheet-metal workers in the East can earn as much as four shillings an hour, and stone-cutters five shillings. In the printing trade, where the hours vary between 36 and 48 a week, the average wage is seven pounds, and skilled craftsmen in the building trade are almost as well off. The relief grants are still paid in "scrip," and vary from province to province. In typical western cases I examined, the average rate for a man and wife and two children was £2 10s. per fortnight. In Ontario I visited a home in which a married couple were receiving 13s. 6d. worth of food vouchers weekly, 4s. 6d. worth of fuel, and clothing and lighting allowances of 1s. 6d. and 1s. 8d. respectively, making a total of 21s. 2d.

The Minister of Labour declared himself opposed to the plan of segregating the young single men unemployed in relief camps. He said: "At their maximum strength, these camps afforded shelter to 21,000 men. They cost

the Dominion Government in the neighbourhood of nine million dollars." Many thousands of these young fellows were placed on the railways and farms by the Government. Minister Rogers also alleged that many Communist agitators found their way into these camps, which were organised as an emergency relief measure.

The new Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, had written to me asking me to call at Government House, and I welcomed the opportunity of meeting this famous imperialist, whose work I had long admired. He displayed a knowledge of my own activities which opened my eyes.

He has no fear of extremist propaganda, and in a long interview he expressed a great satisfaction at the rapid economic and social progress of the Dominion. He confirmed my own impression that faith in the Empire was stronger than ever, although there are far less rhetorical speeches by politicians. He had found no threat of secessionist propaganda anywhere. And even if this did develop, there is no man better qualified to deal with it than the new Governor-General, whose habit of forthright speech and dislike of purely ornamental formality has endeared him to Canadians. He described to me his forthcoming trip to the Barren Lands and the North-West Territory, and said that he would utilise aeroplanes fitted with landing skids for visits to the lonely trappers and hunters of the Arctic Circle. He will cover more than ten thousand miles in three months, and much of this journey will be through barren frontier land never before visited by the head of the State. His unheralded visits to the lonely outposts will undoubtedly mean a great increase in prestige and popularity, and as this tour will be the first of a series, a brilliant term of office is augured.

In Alberta I found there was a growing dissatisfaction with the Aberhart Social Credit Government, which was elected in 1935 on a promise to pay all adults £5 a month as a "credit dividend." Aberhart intended to create a special "Alberta currency," which he would legalise as acceptable for debts. Alberta products

would be bought by the Government with this money and sold elsewhere for Canadian currency, which would be utilised for necessary imports. But soon after his election it was patent that the Premier had no definite and clearly worked-out plan, and when Major Douglas refused to co-operate, and other leaders of the Social Credit movement in England who visited Edmonton made pessimistic statements, discontent became open. Demonstrations are now so frequent that little attention is paid to them by the Government or the citizens of the provincial capital. The Premier's flamboyant public appearances and demagogic speeches maintain the excitement, but there are rumours of party splits, and Ministers have already criticised each other on the platform. Recent plans for a debt moratorium were turned down by the Federal Government, and although Aberhart threatens a general default, his waning political influence will probably prevent this. Eighty per cent of the people in the province have signed a covenant demanding " dividends," and £50,000 worth of " Prosperity Certificates " have already been issued, but shopkeepers and wholesalers usually refused to accept them, so that the present situation is exceedingly complicated. Elected on such a very definite promise, Premier Aberhart must produce results or accept defeat at the next trial of strength. He has already admitted that his first plans proved unworkable. and the £5 a month promise has been reduced to 20s. His next move is difficult to forecast, but business men were pessimistic. Alberta conditions are, nevertheless, improving, and the province is receiving its share of the spreading prosperity wave.

Canada to-day is the fifth greatest trading nation in the world, and the fourth in volume of exports. A combination of factors have produced this result—which is amazing when one considers the 1934 position—but chief among them was the determination of Canadians to preserve healthy stability through all the shocks and storms of the lean years.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

REBEL SPAIN

NOTWITHSTANDING MY PASSES FROM THE FOREIGN Office and the *Sous-Prefecture* at Bayonne, I was turned back after crossing the Franco-Spanish frontier at Pont d'Irun. A young *Falangista* (Fascist), in a black tunic and tasselled fez, who displayed the Italian Fascist Party badge in his lapel, told me that I must have a pass from General Franco's headquarters. He was supported by the frontier guards, in their old-fashioned three-cornered hats, and by the rebel officers around. After an argument I was compelled to leave. My first visit to Spain had lasted ten minutes.

At the Villa Nacho-Enea, S. Jean de Luz, I forced my way through a crowd of well-dressed refugees from loyalist Spain, and asked the officials for a permit. I was told to return on the following day for the decision. This was on time—a definite ban. I was refused permission to enter any part of Franco Spain. As I had never written a word against Franco, I was naturally irritated, and asked for an explanation. "It is the order of the General," I was told—"there can be no explanation." But I recalled the really remarkable stupidity and incompetence of Franco's representatives in London, and insisted on seeing the Chargé d'Affaires. He proved to be a suave, clever young man and he would not consider a telegram to Salamanca. While I was waiting for him, however, I was left alone for some minutes in the main office, and I took an imprint of his rubber stamp on a blank piece of paper—"just in case." As things turned out, this was fortunate.

I was now resolved to cross the frontier, and went over at Fontarrabia, which is only separated from the frontier by 500 yards of water. In fact, anyone with a hundred francs to spare could get across at a number of points, for the long line of the Pyrenees would require several divisions for effective policing.

At Fontarrabia everything was quiet, and the only signs of war were the wall posters. At Irun, however, the signs of conflict were obvious. I found that the stories about the massacre of trade unionists in the town were true enough, and eveyone was eager to express his hatred of Communism and labour unions. Most of the executions had followed " informations " laid by Fascists. There were no signs of poverty, and the shops were well-stocked, while everyone seemed confident that Franco would be in Madrid and Barcelona by the end of the year.

All the persons who had been connected with the radical movements were dead or abroad, apart from those in the prisons and hospitals, and this was also true of San Sebastian, a tram ride away.

In San Sebastian the women grumbled about the postal service. The censorship on letters from the front was exceedingly strict, and some pencilled messages were quite indecipherable. At the post offices many arguments were in progress—and a Spanish argument *is* an argument. The unfortunate officials were not responsible, but they had to hear the brunt of the criticism. One woman raised a laugh when she said that from her Juan's letter she knew he wanted something, but could not make out what it was. " Juan always wanted wine, cigarettes and a chair when he was here, so send them—that will be it," she was counselled.

On the Bilbao front, which I visited with the help of the unofficial " pass " I wrote out, I found several German artillerists. They paid a high tribute to the courage of the defenders, and I gathered that the morale and fighting ability of the loyalists had been a

big surprise to them. The highly trained German regulars and reservists had expected to "walk over" the "undisciplined rabble," as General de Llano called his opponents. Further German and Italian intervention was being discussed, and there was speculation about the size of the new drafts. The German and Italian officers made no pretence of being volunteers from totalitarian states, and they seemed to think the discussions on this subject were a mild kind of joke. They talked freely enough about their work—much more freely than if they had been at home. One Italian said: "We knew the Spanish war was coming last June (the rebellion started in July.) But it was more difficult than we thought. And we need 50,000 men yet to make sure." I asked him about the bombing of open towns, and he shrugged his shoulders. "It is not barbarism," he said, "it is to demoralise—that is the way all wars go now. Look at Abyssinia—we had to bomb everybody to win quickly. And the Reds are worse than us."

On the Bilbao front I saw perhaps a score of Spanish officers, and more than half of them wore German or Italian political badges, besides the five crossed arrows of the *Falange*, showing how closely Franco is identifying himself with the dictator states. Franco himself, a capable soldier, has no *flair* for picking good subordinates. Two of his leading generals are notorious drunkards, and one of these makes radio speeches after consuming his daily ration of three bottles of cognac, according to the gossip of his staff. I heard one of his talks, and he was clearly in some abnormal condition.

Most of the rich men in Spain had gathered at Burgos, the insurgent capital, where the German and Italian Embassies were the pivots of social life. Parades of Moorish cavalry and German auxiliaries were frequent, and German instructors were giving a final polish to the *Falangista* levies. There were literally dozens of Spanish generals—it must be remembered that there were no fewer than 800 Spanish generals on active service, in the reserve, and on the retired list in 1931!

This absurd position and the sweeping army reforms of the Popular Front Government were the main causes of the rebellion.

The cost of living was quite cheap—one could stay in the best hotels for the equivalent of 30s. a week, and the business men were jubilant about the steadiness of the Franco peseta. The workers I saw were unwilling to discuss the situation, and I gathered that there was a good deal of opposition to the rebel government. The lack of enthusiasm for Franco was more patent south of Old Castile, but it was impossible to estimate its importance, for military control was very strict, and drumhead courts martial awaited the critics. But there was a sullenness among the farmers and peasants which spoke for itself, while even in the *Commandancias* it was admitted that Andalusia was only held by main force.

In Burgos I met a priest from Madrid who gave me harrowing details about the massacre of his colleagues. I asked him why the church was so seldom discussed, although the posters continually stressed the church-burning and priest-killing. " Even if we win the war," he said, " things will never be the same again. There is not a church open in Red Spain, and this affair will teach us all lessons." This chastened attitude, however, was not shared by ever priest, and many have taken up Franco's cause whole-heartedly as a crusade against Bolshevism.

Some of the Franco officers were concerned about their uniforms, which looked drab against the German and Italian brilliance at the Embassy receptions. " All my pay is going on khaki and field-boots," one Spanish officer told me. I asked him if he was compelled to buy dress uniform, but he said : " No, but if you want promotion you must cut a good figure." Certainly he cut a good figure, with his shiny boots and spurs and waisted tunic, and he was the object of derisive criticism from the conscripts on leave, who had dirty blankets slung across their dust-stained clothes.

That there was still heavy financial support from

Germany and Italy, for Franco was certain, and the cession of the Balearics, Majorca, and Morocco after a Franco victory were practically taken for granted. At first glance one might imagine that Franco would have had difficulty in securing acceptance of this policy, but in fact most Spaniards have considered their colonies a useless burden for years. "As long as we have the Canaries for tobacco and bananas they can sink Morocco," said one merchant. "The Reds can't get smokes now," he added, with glee (this proved only half-true).

Some of the Moors I saw denied that they had received German marks of the 1923 inflation period, which are valueless, but they had heard rumours about such payments. Later I found some of the first detachments—most of whose members have been killed—did receive these notes, but after an outcry Franco promised to redeem them all, after disclaiming sanction for such payments. But even now many of the Moorish mercenaries—especially the recent drafts—are being paid with cheques and credit notes payable only in towns still held by the Government. A Spanish staff colonel I questioned about these notes said: "It is an incentive to victory, and as long as they are paid, who cares?"

At Vittoria I found that a number of the German auxiliaries had mutinied and refused to go to the front. I was surprised at this, for normally discipline in the German units is excellent. The trouble was about unredeemed pay promises, as usual, and about the Germans being compelled to perform all the most difficult tasks and occupy the most dangerous sectors. The German Ambassador at Burgos intervened, and a settlement was reached. But there was also trouble with the auxiliaries at San Sebastian while I was there, and the local paper *Unitad* was suppressed for its truthful reports. Here Moreno, the *Falangist* chief, was killed with about twenty of his men, but this trouble was inspired by political differences.

Apart from these incidents, however, my impression was that Franco had achieved considerable success in unifying the apparently hopelessly discordant *Falangistas*, Requetists, Carlists, and Navarrese.

The German officers expected to be in Spain "a long time"—according to one I met at the Burgos Embassy. "Franco cannot govern Spain without our help now, you know," he said. And I saw the force of this remark when I watched the smart German regulars goose-stepping past a ceremonial dais packed by a selection of Spain's 800 generals, whose nondescript levies cut a very poor figure beside the "crusaders" from the north!

CHAPTER TWENTY

CATALONIA

CROSSING THE PYRENEES AT PORT BOU, I FOUND THE Spanish frontier station in darkness. After interrogations by the militia officers I joined a group of Spanish refugees from the Basque front and slept on a platform seat until 4.15 a.m., when the train for Barcelona was due to leave. The train, decorated with the F.A.I. (anarchist) and C.N.T. (trade union) signs to show that it had been nationalised, was only half an hour late. Every station had a liberal supply of Communist posters exhorting the peasants to join the militia and support the Party. At Gerona we were joined by a large party of equipment-laden soldiers, and they took over the best carriages, refusing to occupy the third-class seats.

In Barcelona, capital of Catalonia, there was an atmosphere of tension, for the struggle for power between the political groups was obviously coming to a head. All industries had been nationalised, and every firm employing more than five persons had to accept the orders of the workers' committee. These committees were controlled by the Communists, the F.A.I., and the C.N.T., so that although the Government was nominally democratic the real direction of affairs was in the hands of the extremists. There were bread queues in every other street, and most shops were closed. Food was scarce, but the strict rationing system prevented any actual distress. In the banks cheques could only be cashed by showing an authorisation from a workers'

committee, which explained the large exodus of wealthy and middle class people.

Mr. Kendall Park, managing director of the Spanish Trading Co., who is now in charge of the Foreign Colonies Hospital, gave me an account of recent events, and advised me to go to the Propaganda Ministry for introductions to the leaders. In his hospital I saw children from Madrid, who were enjoying their first good meals for many months.

Every church was closed, save for those used as storehouses and garages, and the cathedral entrances had been bricked up, but there were few signs of damage in the city. I found the cost of living cheaper than in Franco Spain, and an English pound exchanged for 128 pesetas, which was enough to pay a week's bill at a big hotel. All the hotels were under workers' control, and most of them were filled by soldiers on leave.

At the Communist headquarters I found delegates from various countries, and from the fleet of motor cars used, the huge staff employed, and the vast quantities of propaganda, literature, posters, and newspapers in Spanish and Catalan, it was obvious that the Comintern was making a great effort to Bolshevise Catalonia. The chief Red agent told me with pride that he had already sent 10,000 men to the front himself, but he would not be drawn about funds.

At the Francia station and in the dock warehouses were lines of Russian guns, tanks, and trucks of shells, but the only Russian soldiers I saw were officer technicians.

Senor Requeta, the Catalan Minister of Propaganda, a tall, alert young man, gave me a great deal of information about the state of Catalan finances, which was startlingly frank. The danger of inflation was clearly serious, and there were continual disputes between the Catalan and Valencia Governments about credits and the right to use the Bank of Spain gold abroad. The revenue of the Generalidad, as the Government is called, had fallen by 80 per cent in the last year, while

expenditure has increased by over 800 per cent. All coined money was frequently called in by the control committees, and very often no change was available. Purchasers at cafés were given slips of paper stamped by the café committee—"good for 1½ pesetas"—to be used another day.

The U.G.T. trade union leader told me there was not a priest left in Barcelona, and certainly I could not find one. He believed that more trouble was brewing, and admitted that the Communists were growing in influence. "But we shall go on, forgetting these troubles, until the war is won," he said. He had no idea how long hostilities would last, but was hopeful of a loyalist victory in six months. "Some of the Valencia chiefs have no conception of our difficulties here." I asked him if it was true that there were now no Christian burial services, and he said this was so.

The Communists, indeed, use every funeral as an occasion for a propaganda demonstration. Coffins are covered with red flags, and all wreaths sold in the markets must bear revolutionary devices. No prayer may be said at gravesides, even by relatives of the deceased. Older people I saw were very hostile to these proceedings, but in the swirl of the revolutionary tide they are unable to make themselves felt. I confirmed the reports about the shooting of many priests, but it was impossible to obtain reliable figures, and the Communist anti-God propaganda is being poured out at such a rate that it is now fashionable to attack Christianity.

On the Huescas front I found that the international columns were being given the most difficult sectors. Among the Britishers I met were George Otwell, an author who had served five years with the Indian Police, and Jack Ritchie, formerly a well-known heavy-weight boxer in Scotland. The volunteers were paid 10 pesetas (about half a crown) a day and officers get 25 pesetas.

Several overtures were made to me to join them—one

offer was from an aide of Captain Corp, the Belgian commandant of the Huescas mixed column—as they knew I had previous military service, but I refused, having received a War Office order before leaving England. In any case, it was admitted frankly that rapid promotion would be more likely if I joined the Communist Party !

The loyalists on the Huescas front are well armed with light artillery and Russian machine guns. The opposing trench systems are only 150 yards apart at some points, and at night the soldiers shout slogans at each other. Until recently no prisoners were taken by either side, but now the loyalists send their captives to base camps. Ten days' leave was granted every six months—every three months to volunteers—and this had been extended in many cases, as a " big push " was being prepared for midsummer. The food in the trenches was much better than in the towns, and it was clear that the Government was sending its best supplies to the front.

The morale of the men in the trenches, Spaniards and foreigners alike, was excellent, but their ideas of discipline would shock any British regular. Most of the volunteers had received only a week's training at base camps before being sent to the front, and knew nothing beyond aiming a rifle and manipulating hand grenades. Uniforms were nondescript or non-existent. Some captains wore flannel trousers and pullovers, without hats, their three bars of rank being sometimes pinned on their shirts ! There was no saluting, save on formal occasions, when clenched fists were raised to caps. Most of the fighting consisted of sporadic platoon raids, in which hand grenades played an important rôle. Every day a barrel of local wine was sent to each squad, and there were liberal supplies of literature and other comforts which would startle the men who served on the western front !

I do not know what percentage of 1914–18 conscientious objectors was embodied in the Huescas front line, but it must have been fairly high, from the

talks I had. I asked Ritchie, the boxer, who is an ex-C.O., why he was willing to fight in Spain, and he replied : " Here, I'm fighting capitalism and Fascism. England's no good. I'm staying in Spain after the war." Similar sentiments were echoed elsewhere, and the Communist political officers attached to each battalion —some of them I.R.A. members—welcomed them as a sign of " proletarian progress." I had other ideas, and Ritchie denounced me on one occasion as a Fascist to Dr. Levin, an American-Jewish Red officer from New York, but nothing happened, although I had an uneasy moment, for I had several hundred Franco pesetas in my pocket !

On my second visit to the Catalan capital I was on a troop train from Valencia, and when we arrived at Barcelona at midnight we had no knowledge of any trouble in the city, which had never been mentioned in the Valencia papers. So we were naturally irritated when we found the Paseo de Gracia station gates closed. The porters seemed astonished to find that we wished to leave the station—with good reason, as it turned out—and there was a tremendous uproar. I asked to see station officials, but none were available. One porter said : " You are lucky the gates are locked—the streets outside here are controlled by the F.A.I. (anarchists)."

" When are *you* going home ? " I asked him. " Me—I stay here until the trouble is over ! "

Some of the soldiers asked the engine driver to go to another town, and the arguments went on for two hours without result. We sought for sleeping quarters as the crackle of machine-gun fire sounded from above. I tried to pick the locks of the station doors, but they were much too heavy for wire and ordinary keys, and I slept on a clerk's desk in the main hall. Most of the soldiers slept on the platforms.

During the night a few people banged on the gates and windows for me to let them in, apparently thinking I was a railway employee, but I waved them away.

They could not hear through the thick glass, but with elaborate gestures I made them understand, and they went off, keeping close by the walls of the narrow streets.

An official opened the gates at 6 a.m.

As soon as I walked out with my suitcase I was arrested by the militia guards, and taken to the barricaded and sandbagged Red headquarters by an armed squad. I was released within an hour, after interrogations, through the intervention of a German woman doctor. I was filthy, hungry, and unshaven, but my new friend looked fairly neat. "There has been much trouble here," was her only comment on the scenes of violence she had witnessed. She shrugged her shoulder when I asked her if she was getting any food. I asked her how she had managed to wash—everyone else I saw was dirty—and she said she had not washed, but smiled at the implied compliment.

The streets were deserted save for soldiers, and on my way to an hotel I was stopped at every second corner by sentries, who examined my suitcase for bombs. On the flagstones in the Plaza de Cataluña there were large bloodstains, and the broken and bent lamp standards and glass fragments everywhere showed the nature of the fighting. The crackle of machine guns, that had sounded occasionally during the night, became more frequent. It took me an hour to cover half a mile, and the food queues were just beginning to form up when the dull boom of guns was heard.

The anarchists, unwilling to take orders from the trade unionists and the Government, had decided to make a bid for power, and the slaughter went on all day. Squads of the "uncontrolled patrols" in the streets interrogated passers-by, and many who could not produce a workers' committee card of some kind were shot on the spot, among them several labour leaders. Terror and confusion spread through the city. All traffic and public services were suspended, all shops closed, and when it became known that the Assault

Guards and anarchists had seized the outlying town of Hospitalet and the city park, there was talk of an extremist dictatorship.

At the Generalidad Palace, guarded by large numbers of regular soldiers and militia, I passed through a courtyard full of "expropriated" Hispano-Suizas, Rolls-Royces, and Mercédès. Many of the sentries had their hands in their pockets, and some sat on the pavements rolling cigarettes. Their watch was so lax that I was able to wander around the palace without once being questioned, although I had absolutely no right to be there. When a huge crowd of people gathered in the narrow plaza before the palace, the sentries picked up their arms, expecting an attack. From the suburbs came the noise of bursting bombs and rifle fire. President Compañys, who had himself obtained control by a *coup d'état* in 1931, rushed out of his office—a thin, studious-faced man with bright eyes and an eager manner, his hair ruffled.

Standing on the balcony he implored the people to do all they could to preserve order and appealed for unity in the struggle against Franco. His agitated ministers, on both sides of him shouted advice under cover of the din. But when the Assault Guards below and many of the soldiers shouted anarchist and communist slogans it was clear that the time for verbal appeals had passed, and Compañys went inside to admit failure and to send a message to Valencia. He could not telephone, as the Telephone Exchange had been seized by the anarchists, and was now under Government fire.

Watching the shooting and rioting outside, I saw children playing at soldiers in one alley, while in the next militiamen were spraying with lead a house occupied by the F.A.I. terrorists.

I had had nothing to eat for thirty-six hours save an orange and a packet of raisins, but food was unobtainable this day. Those people who had anything worth stealing in their houses barricaded themselves in and did not emerge for three days. There were barricades

at nearly every main street corner, and women helped to build huge erections in the Calle Fivaller, bordering the Plaza de la Republic near the Generalidad and on the opposite side of the palace, near the Ramblas. In the Paseo de Gracia the opposing sides were firing at each other over barricades only fifty yards apart, and on the Ramblas the little piles of stones and sand-bags were held by both sides. Many of the Ramblas shops had been wrecked, but I saw no daylight looting. The anarchists were digging trenches in the suburbs and executing all opponents captured.

The morgue reported that only 183 corpses had arrived, but many casualty wagons had not then reported. The official figures issued later gave 350 killed and 1350 wounded over a three day period, but the actual death roll was probably larger, as the anarchists were notorious for their ingenuity in disposing of bodies. In one case I knew, they had opened a cemetery tomb and dumped three " awkward " corpses inside, where they lay undiscovered for a long time.

After General Pozas arrived with Government troops and loyalist ships from Valencia the restoration of order was only a question of time. The loyalist troops clearly did not intend half-measures. Everyone found in possession of a card of the " Youth Freedom " group was at once shot in the back of the neck. The Francia station, opposite my hotel, which had been seized by the anarchists, was stormed with the help of armoured cars and the loyalist assault guards killed everyone inside. Some of the anarchists threw themselves out of the upper windows into the street and others were thrown out, to be shot down below.

Leaving Barcelona was no easy matter. I wanted to go to Figueras, and started off for the Francia station early one morning. A train was due to leave at 7.25 a.m. On the way I met several men returning from the station. " No trains," they said. But I went on to the station, having nothing else to do, and trusting to my luck. The upper windows of the Governacio were

lined with soldiers and they halted me with loud shouts. I saw several rifles aimed at me. No wonder that at the last corner the civilian sentry had been amused when he let me through ! But I shouted my intentions loudly and quickly, and was told to go round the back of the barracks to a side entrance of the station. In the station, which was still under fire from the park, there was a small group of intending passengers and about a hundred soldiers and officials. No one knew anything about trains. Food was in everybody's mind—in mine more than any of them, I think, for I had had nothing to eat or drink for a considerable period—longer than ever before in my life. Hunger, I noticed, seemed to sharpen everyone's wits, and also greatly increased irritability and physical activity. There was nothing to eat in the station—even the automatic machines being empty or wrecked—but I got some water and set off to interview some engine-drivers. I found the driver of the 7.25 on the platform, and was very pleased when he said he intended to leave on time. I broke the news to the passengers and their spirits rose. But it sounded too good to be true and our faces fell again in a few minutes when the officials said that no trains could leave, as earlier trains had been fired on from the park. As we argued fresh bursts of machine-gun fire sprayed the roof and the farther platform. The clock had been hit by a mortar shell.

We pleaded with the driver to take the train out and eventually he agreed, after the dozen passengers had arranged reliefs among themselves in case he was hit. I knew nothing about driving or firing trains nor, I think, did any of the others, but there were no objectors, and we pulled out about 9.30, after barricading the windows with the long hair cushions and our suitcases. We lay on the floor of our wooden coach until we passed the park, and I remember thinking that the atmosphere of this train journey was more light-hearted than any I had ever undertaken, for everyone seemed in

surprisingly good spirits, no doubt because bread, eggs, and coffee loomed ahead.

Passing the park the driver blew derisive whistles as the crack-crack of rifles sounded. But no one was hit, and that was all that mattered. A few miles further on we stood up and dismantled the barricades. For once everyone in a railway carriage was willing to talk to his neighbour! Mine told me of his hairbreadth escapes from death the day before. He had only saved his life once by shouting "Say Enn Tay" (C.N.T.) when taken unawares by soldiers at a window above. And "Say Enn Tay" had been his lucky mascot many times the night before when he had run for cover. He had lain on his stomach in the Plaza de Cataluñya for half an hour while men bled to death around him, mown down by the anarchist "Tommy-guns."

At Gerona there was bread, wine, fruit, and omelettes, and we fell out of the train and ran along the platform like famished dogs. When I walked back loaded with provisions, I received some critical stares from people standing about and heard something about greed and gluttons, etc. The good folk of Gerona did not realise how well off they were. Food there had been plentiful since the beginning of the war, and as I knew from regrettably long experience, people with full stomachs often cannot appreciate the ways of the hungry.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

LOYALIST SPAIN

NO HONEST OBSERVER WHO SPENT A FEW WEEKS IN loyalist Spain could doubt that the Valencia Government was controlled to a large extent by the U.S.S.R. The Ministers were dependent upon Russia for their supplies, while the militia army was politically in the hands of the Red policy officers and propagandists attached to each battalion. The "Internationale" was sung at all meetings and parades, and the Russian clenched fist salute had been formally adopted by the army. The air force was almost entirely supplied by Russia, as were tank and heavy artillery personnel and equipment. The steady fall in the value of the peseta abroad had also accelerated the growth of Russian influence, as Moscow was now the only capital in which Spanish buying agents could obtain easy credits.

In every city I visited in loyalist Spain I found that the Communist Party offices had been greatly expanded, and the new anti-God bureaux were themselves much larger than the entire pre-civil war party organisations. Side by side with the destruction of all democratic organisations, the Reds were systematically uprooting the religious beliefs of the peasants and workers—the churches themselves were all closed or destroyed, or in use as warehouses, without exception, outside the Basque. This attack on religion, which must have cost the Russians tens of millions of pesetas, was carried on through the media of newspapers; cheap books in Spanish and Catalan; exhibitions; coloured posters and "stickers"; radio talks; and continual meetings.

Most of the Communist offices were situated in large hotels—all Spanish hotels had been " nationalised "—and outside most of them was a line of expensive cars, stolen from the *ricos*.

Train journeys were adventures in Spain, as there were frequent rumours in the war areas of forward stations being held by well-armed opposition groups. Rumours that were nearly always unfounded. A real difficulty was the lack of food. Leaving the Teruel front I was unable to obtain any provisions save fruit. Most of the soldiers with me were nearly as badly off and we looked forward to reaching Tarragona, where there was a canteen. At Tarragona only two yard-long rolls of bread and six eggs were available for about fifty men, and the counter was rushed. I know only one way of obtaining food under these conditions—that is to stand opposite the loudest shouter among the noisy attackers. It worked again this time. The women in the canteens never serve the noisiest man first, and to show they are not afraid they generally give the first sandwiches or hunks of bread to the men furthest away from him. This Machiavellian system worked with great success both in Government and rebel Spain.

At Valencia, the Government capital, I saw several of the attachés at the Russian Embassy in the Hotel Metropol, and they confirmed my impression that the Embassy was used for many other purposes besides diplomatic duties. M. Gaikis, the new Ambassador, whom I was to interview, and who had recently replaced Marcel Rosenberg, ex-Secretary-General of the League of Nations, was working sixteen hours a day, and there was a continual stream of couriers between the lavishly furnished hotel and the Beni-Carlo Palace, headquarters of the Prime Minister.

Throughout Valencia province there was a great shortage of food, and the queues were in the streets from early morning until dusk. Those women who were not served on one day—some of them waited twelve hours only to be disappointed—were given places at

the head of the queue on the day following, and this led to continual arguments. But I saw only one food riot—in the Calle de la Tertulia in Valencia, in which about five hundred women and a few soldiers were involved. In the capital I had considerable difficulty in obtaining meals, and many of the foreign residents got only one meal a day. "*No hay pan*" (No bread) was posted up on the restaurant doors almost every morning, and breakfast was always the same—coffee without milk and an orange.

A French journalist I met when I arrived at Valencia said: "Take a careful note of your lodgings. You have to be a homing pigeon to find your way after dark." The warning was timely. All lights went out at nine o'clock, and it was impossible to see a yard. My landlady had provided me with a huge key for the outer door, which looked big enough to open the gate of a fortress, and filled one of my coat pockets. I knew I was staying at 37 Calle de Pellajo, but as the street names had all been altered—mine had not yet been renamed—this was not so helpful as it should have been. Fortunately I have a sense of direction, and I reached my lodgings safely, although some nondescript individuals claiming to be military police questioned me when I was turning the huge key. I was more fortunate than some of the militiamen in the same street, while many of the International Division volunteers on leave, knowing no Spanish, slept in the streets. One New Yorker I saw the next day, still unwashed, said: "I've got plenty of money, but it's no use—they eat here at nine and it's lights out at nine too, so where are you? There's one thing, though, it's not so bad sleeping out when it's warm." I advised him to draw a map, but he said: "Huh—I thought of that, too—last time I showed a man a map they wheeled me to the calaboose for being a spy, and I thought I was going to be rubbed out!"

At the *Censura* office I met a number of foreign journalists, including H. N. Brailsford, and gave them

the latest news from the rebel front, which I had just left. Brailsford thought that much of the nationalisation was of a temporary character, but I could not believe that. After interviewing Government leaders, who had their headquarters in the fifteenth-century palaces abandoned by the nobles, I went on to Madrid in an "expropriated" car. The Government leaders had all been anxious to claim the war as a defence of democracy against Fascism, but I never saw any signs of democracy while I was in Spain, in spite of making allowance for war conditions. All essential services and policies were controlled by the Reds, and I had had some experience of their ideas of democracy! As in Russia, an attempt was being made in Spain to counterbalance the lack of food with an amplitude of propaganda. But the hungry militiamen sitting outside the cafés drinking vermouth (1d. a glass) sighed for something solid to eat, while they shooed away the filthy beggars of all ages who pestered them, and the propagandists handing out leaflets for yet another *gran miting*.

Three-fourths of Madrid had been under air and artillery bombardment since November, 1936, but the residential Salamanca district had hardly been touched. It is well known that many Franco supporters—mostly business men and their families—live here, and Franco himself claimed that a "Fifth Column" of rebels would emerge from within loyalist Madrid once he captured the main defences on the Casa del Campo front.

I reached the city by car from Valencia—in a big foreign limousine that had been commandeered by the workers' committee. We could obtain no food in the capital beyond fruit and some venerable chocolate and we envied the soldiers from Madrid on the lorries which passed us in swirling dust-clouds, for they had yard-long rolls of bread to wave at us triumphantly. The driver took many side-roads, for the main highway had been repeatedly bombed, and we were frequently

stopped by patrols. Most of the young officials who looked at our papers were in mufti, and it was quite impossible to guess who or what they were, but the driver took their orders without question. Our automobile was camouflaged with green and brown stripes against aircraft, and on the sides were suitable slogans—" Death to Fascism " and " C.N.T." (workers' union), while on the bonnet we displayed a Government pennant. Every vehicle now carries such marks of identification, as in some areas village militia have been known to fire at official Government vehicles.

There was no food to be had in the Castilian villages, in spite of liberal offers of money, and we were weary of oranges, which we could pick ourselves from the wayside groves. Every car on the dusty, stony roads was driven at breakneck speed, as if an aerial attack was actually in progress, and at a cross roads there was evidence of a recent collision.

Entering the scarred suburbs the dull boom of heavy guns, which had been sounding for the past hour, gave way to a thunderous roar, and it was clear that a new attack was being launched. Streets and buildings were in a better condition than I had expected, and by the irony of fate many of the adjacent palaces have been demolished by Franco's guns. After finding a room in the Salamanca quarter I disregarded an offer to visit the International Brigade headquarters, as I knew that several of the political officers there were likely to show an embarrassing interest in my activities.

I accompanied an American squad of the Brigade, however, which was moving up to the Franceses Bridge, where a surprise attack from the nationalists was to be countered. The men were grumbling about being given " another dirty job," and did not mince their language in criticising the Spanish officers. Hardly any of the men—mostly New Yorkers—spoke any Spanish.

The Franceses Bridge crosses the River Manzanares, and lies to the north of the Casa del Campo park,

which is the principal front. After a forty-five minutes bombardment with light artillery, which I observed from a barricade near the Montana Barracks, two sections of nationalist tanks and armoured cars appeared from the park, but the shell-pitted ground was unsuitable for these manœuvres, while the steady machine-gun fire of the loyalists showed the impossibility of rush tactics. Nevertheless, a rush was made, and it was seen that the insurgents meant to cut off the loyalist salient between the University City and the northern part of the park. But the attack never looked like succeeding against the machine-gun network, and after a couple of hours the rebels were back in their original trenches, leaving a good number of dead behind. Anti-tank guns were rushed up towards the front line by the defenders, but the tanks and cars had retired before they could be brought into action.

After this episode, I obtained a much-needed meal. The soldiers had much better food than the unfortunate civil population in the capital, where a piece of bread a day was something to brag about.

The Madrileños were so accustomed to aerial bombardment that there was little disorder when the Junkers and Capronis appeared. The scamper for the underground *refugios* had been made so many times that one often saw laughing faces in the shelters. In the daily rushes to the *refugios* for protection against the bombs there was a good deal of banter and joking. In one refuge I found a man with a bag of oranges and a pile of strapped books. "This war is giving me an education," he told me. "In the old days my shop was so busy that I had no time for reading, so I am making up for it now!" Other men brought dominoes, draught-boards, and chessmen, and there was even talk of a *refugio* champion! Gas and thermite bombs were new worries, however, for the gas might hang about the bomb craters for days, and the incendiary bombs could burn their way through steel, according to reports. Very few bombs of this type had been used, however.

The children were well drilled by their parents about the *refugios*, and usually played in their own streets. They played at being *ricos* and *communistas*, and another favourite game was called *Popi*, after the cartoon-films.

I met several Russian tank and air force officers—mostly men in the early thirties. They were quite cheerful, and as they enjoyed great prestige as a result of the Press and platform eulogies, they had a better time than their colleagues from other countries. I asked one of them—Lieutenant Zanoff, from Kiev—how long the war would last. " One year—perhaps two," he said. He discounted the quick victory speeches of the politicians, but confirmed the report of the forthcoming big Government offensive. I said : " Will Spain go Communist if Franco is beaten ? "

" That is certain. The party supports the *Frente Popular*—but only on its own conditions." He laughed meaningly, but when I asked him leading questions about the Russian agents he was non-committal !

The Fifth Regiment, organised by the Communist Party, was armed with Russian rifles, machine-guns, and tanks, and all the Government bombers and tanks I saw on this front were from Russian steel plants.

In the American column, which was much larger than had been reported, I heard lurid stories of the " frightfulness " tactics employed by the rebels, but from other comments it was clear that these were by no means confined to one side. At first ex-Premier Caballero's appeal for clemency to prisoners was heeded, but as the war progressed wounded and captured men were butchered indiscriminately. In recent weeks, however, there had been a return to normal war practice, and big concentration camps for prisoners had been established near Valencia.

In the Salamanca district life went on much as before —shops, which had been nationalised, were open, food queues appeared as in Valencia, and cinemas were often crowded during the air raids, in spite of the Defence Junta warnings.

I sought out General Miaja, the heavily-built, spectacled, unmilitary-looking commander of the Army of the Centre and chief defender of Madrid, and found him confident about the result of the war. Miaja is unused to political work, and at a "United Front" demonstration of soldiers and civilians he read out his short speech in a hardly audible voice. Only those of us around him heard anything. But when he finished up with the inevitable "*Salud*" and raised his clenched fist to his cap, there was tremendous cheering. Asked about the disappearance of the volunteers from the war front, he said: "It would be a question of at least two months." But so far there had been no attempt to disband the auxiliary forces on either side, in spite of the facile promises made to the Non-Intervention Committee. Miaja had high praise for the Madrileños, whose heroism and discipline in face of horror, he said, had won the admiration of the world. The most important moment of his career, he added, was that in which he was given command of the Army of the Centre. Asked about the main military objective of the Fascist bombers, he said: "It has no point save to demoralise the civil population." He praised the young men who worked under him for their enthusiasm. But he did not mention General Kléber, the Canadian whom he replaced, and who was really responsible for saving Madrid when the Government first decided to abandon the city. I failed to locate Kléber, who may have been on another front, but a French officer gave me his solution—"Kléber was getting too much publicity—he had to go."

General Miaja and his colleagues on the southern front were not Communists, but the Russians and foreign Reds had complete control of the International Divisions —many of whose leaders were sent to Spain from Moscow, Paris, and Prague, by order of the Comintern as soon as the rebellion started. A good many Socialist volunteers I met were dissatisfied with this turn of events, but only a small number of them have returned

to their own countries. One of the most frequently heard grumbles concerned the facility with which the Communists obtained leave. A Fifeshire miner named Campbell said to me : " Some of these fellows come out for a week, make some speeches to us, and then go abroad for months on propaganda tours." This was confirmed from a dozen sources, and I had, besides, met some of these travelling " veterans of the platform " in England and America, where they were raising money with considerable success.

The morale of the volunteers was excellent, and there was little to complain about so far as food is concerned. The inverted V system of trenches had been capably organised, and the machine-gun positions were well-planned. Army discipline was better than in other areas, which is not saying a great deal.

I saw many Italian prisoners, and one or two Germans, and Government officials showed me their papers. One bore the stamp of the Rome War Ministry and was marked *Segretto* (Secret). This paper was signed by the Under-Secretary for war in Rome, and by Colonel Berardi, of the Italian General Staff.

These and other papers I saw would alone prove that Fascist intervention was official, quite apart from the hundreds of pieces of evidence already discovered. But Madrid was weary of discussing the war. During the sunset promenades the crowds talked more about films and the evils of the postal service than the war itself, which was only half a mile away in the besieged University City. On Sunday mornings everyone slept late, as the churches were all closed, and before the mid-day meal the strollers were out to see if yesterday's damage had been repaired by the masons. For the " shock squads " of masons appeared as soon as a day-light bombardment ceased, to repair any walls or barricades in the defended area.

The Madrileños kept their sense of humour in the midst of tragedy. They said : " If a bomb has your

number on it you get it no matter where you are. If not, all is well."

In one of the principal cafés a table laid for one was marked "Reserved for General Mola"—the rebel General who said in November, 1936, that he would take coffee that night in the Puerta del Sol—until he was killed.

But people looked happiest on rainy or cloudy days, knowing that there was less chance of a death-spreading hail when the "ceiling" was low!

So far as the air fighting was concerned, the loyalist Boeing biplane fighters with supercharged Wright Cyclone engines and four synchronised guns (built in Russia under licence) did well—their speed being over 200 m.p.h. The twin-engine three-seater "SB" bombers were easy to handle, and had a speed of 250 m.p.h., carrying over half a ton of bombs, with five hours' fuel. Most bombing raids were carried out at fairly low altitudes—6,000–8,000 feet, and they were all escorted. The German and Italian fighters were compelled to avoid the Russians fighters, which could climb quicker and thus dive upon them. A notable lesson of the air war was that the fastest bombers survived best of all—converted Douglas civil machines having an excellent record. Speed meant safety. Unescorted bombers were often shot down in the early months of the war.

The Government had only a handful of aeroplanes up to November, 1936, when the new Russian machines began to arrive in large quantities.

Machine guns worked best in the fuselage and synchronised wing guns were always jamming, and the fast modern fighters on both sides gave a lot of trouble to their pilots with brakes and retractable gear. It seemed clear that lighter and simpler fighting machines would have been more successful, and the good record of the well-handled small German Heinkels confirmed this impression.

The systematic machine-gunning of bodies of soldiers

by low flying machines was very successful in causing disorder, and very few planes were lost in these attacks. In towns where I was staying bombing by the insurgents was carried on in the most reckless fashion, and the stories of " military objectives " were so much rubbish.

A good deal of misleading information about the international volunteer columns on the Spanish fronts has been circulated in western Europe and America. Many democrats, for example, believe that the columns were formed on the initiative of men whose sole purpose in Spain was to preserve liberty and freedom. In actual fact, the first International Brigade was organised by Communist agents acting on instructions from Russia, and the great majority of unit leaders are professional agents of the Comintern, sent to Spain from the Red headquarters and newspaper offices in Prague, Paris, Warsaw, and Stockholm. To give an example, the English battalion was commanded by W. Macartney, who recently completed a sentence of ten years imprisonment in England for espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union. His aides included a number of people attached to the British Communist Press, some of whom I know personally. The Thaelmann and Garibaldi battalions were run in the same way. General Commiç, commanding the 15th Mixed Brigade, which included hundreds of Britishers, was a professional agent of the Communist Party, a Russian Bolshevik who had been organising Yugoslavia's Reds since the Revolution.

I was given several opportunities of service with the International Brigade. One offer was made by an agent of the War Ministry, who knew that I had had military and flying experience in England.

Before I left Spain I received a letter from the War Office forbidding my enlistment, and I was also compelled to sign a non-intervention form at the Passport Office. But even had I not given these undertakings, I could not have considered joining a force that was almost entirely officered by Communist agents, whose policy is directed from Moscow. The I.L.P. volunteers

were grumbling about the Red propagandists who visited their units. These speakers were using every opportunity to spread "anti-imperialist" doctrines, and they were naturally antagonising the more moderate Britishers.

So far as the good spirits of the men are concerned, there was nothing to complain about, and in fighting efficiency the international volunteers were much superior to the loyalist militia. Contrary to some reports, there were no women in any of the auxiliary units.

Until I visited the Madrid and Huescas fronts I had never believed that an army could be held together by what the Barcelona anarchists call "free discipline." That is to say, uniforms are rarely worn and saluting is reserved for ceremonial parades, and there were frequent arguments about the decisions of the high command. Privates with a grievance—which meant nearly everybody—could complain to the battalion committee, which called on the officers concerned and used anything but moderate language!

There were speeches and discussion meetings every day, and even in the front line trenches on the Casa del Campo the propagandists were busy—shouting unprintable anti-religious slogans at the Franco soldiers a stone's throw away. Franco's men were shouting religious texts and war slogans, through megaphones.

A large number of the British volunteers I met were miners from Scotland and the north of England, and they had adapted themselves to the new conditions with considerable success. The language difficulty was great, and although the Communists were issuing Spanish grammars and dictionaries, they had had little effect so far.

Facing the Madrid University City, the northern flank of the besieged area, I watched the loyalists systematically machine-gunning each "suspect" room, for large numbers of rebels were still in the buildings. I asked an Irishman with me how he was enjoying the

war. " It's not so bad," he said, " and there's one mercy, the weather's good for it." During the winter campaign the troops suffered severely from the cold on the high Madrid plateau, and even then it was bitterly cold between 2 and 6 a.m. The Irishman was looking forward to his ten days' leave, and was planning to go to Valencia, but I advised him to try Barcelona if he wanted two regular meals a day, having recently left the capital.

Among the north countrymen on the Madrid front there was more talk about Sunderland's success in the English Cup than the war itself, and I was asked if I could provide some *real* English newspapers for them —the only paper sold being the British Communist organ, apart from the two-sheet Spanish dailies.

The Madrid volunteers were dressed in a strange assortment of costumes. Pullovers were popular, and the usual dress of the officers was a pullover—worn under a leather jacket—flannel trousers, and strong boots. Few of them wore hats. Many of the men wore the Spanish rope slippers or canvas shoes. I never saw a soldier wearing a tie, as this was considered a badge of " bourgeois respectability." Shaving was obviously not compulsory, and a few of the University and public school " Reds " were growing beards—with indifferent results.

Rifles were of a dozen patterns. The Huescas column had old Spanish equipment and Russian and Spanish rifles. In Madrid there are Russian, British, and Finnish rifles, and Spanish hand-grenades, which had displaced rifles and bayonets as the principal weapons of attack. Wherever tanks were used Russian mechanics were attached to each unit, and the anti-aircraft guns were also of Russian pattern.

The Spaniards had commented on the retention of national characteristics by the various units of the volunteers, and this was indeed borne out both in appearance and reputation. Thus the Germans were noted for their order and discipline ; the British for

their cheerfulness in the face of danger and phlegmatic disregard of difficulties ; the Serbians for their courage under fire ; and the French for their dash in attack.

Some of the volunteers had been offered long leave back to Britain, France, and America, with all passages and expenses paid, on condition that they addressed a number of meetings organised by the Red agents in these countries. Needless to say, such offers were great temptations to the men at the front, and were further examples of the large resources marked down by the Comintern for its Spanish propaganda.

My hardest task in loyalist Spain, like that of so many of my countrymen, was to answer the questions that were always recurring : " What does the British Government intend to do ? " " Is Britain going to let the Fascists do as they like ? " " Britain is a democratic country. Why did she refuse us arms last July ? " " Why have we to ask the Russians for help ? "

I had thought they would know the answers, forgetting that every Spanish schoolboy knew that Wellington saved his country from the first of the modern dictators.

PART TWO

HOME

CHAPTER ONE

BEHIND THE SCENES OF BRITISH POLITICS

AFTER THE TURN OF THE CENTURY THERE WAS A gradual but steady decline in the quality of British Cabinets. When the world-war began political blunders had brought Ireland to the verge of civil war, and that the war itself was won was not because of the men in the House of Commons, for most of whom the soldiers had a profound contempt.

After the war Lloyd George, who had considerable achievements to his credit in industry and social insurance, was at the head of the "hard-faced Parliament," as it was called, because of the many war profiteers who sat in it. The Premier's prestige slumped rapidly, and there was little surprise when he resigned in 1922. Since 1920 there were, with very rare exceptions, over a million workers on the unemployed register. After 1930 the figure rose to well over two million, and over the next seven years fell only slightly below this figure, while if the unemployed people transferred to the relief offices were counted in the figures, as they should be in any honest disclosure, the number would of course be much greater. Thus in my own and dozens of cases, I knew I had been deducted from the unemployed total while still workless—struck off the State "live register" and told to go to the borough relief office.

No post-war Government made any serious effort to deal with this grave unemployment problem, and huge industrial areas became derelict. The unemployment was caused first of all by the decline of the export trade following the war and the failure to maintain the economic planning schemes operated successfully after 1916 by the War Cabinet.

Bonar Law's brief term of office was passed in an atmosphere of controversy and nothing was achieved. The first Labour Government made no attempt to introduce Socialism, and the extraordinary jugglings with Russia of MacDonald drove it from office. It was more than ever obvious that there was no outstanding man of ability in the House capable of maintaining the great Victorian traditions. In its despair the Conservative Party chose Baldwin—a business man with an undistinguished record—as leader. Baldwin possessed great political astuteness, and his apparent simplicity and well-advertised humility enabled him to outgeneral all his opponents. Unfortunately, the humility was not entirely a pose, and while this quality may be admirable in monks and Chinese peasants, it has never been considered a recommendation to the head of a great power, especially when dealing with bullying dictators. An unfortunate home and foreign policy was followed by the Labour success of 1929. Had there been men in the public eye who could have been respected by the whole nation, the whole course of British politics might have been changed. But the only men who might have filled the bill were serving overseas as proconsuls of the world-wide Empire, and Colonel Lawrence, a man of the highest talents and nobility of character, betrayed by the politicians, had deliberately sunk himself in obscurity, along with many other natural leaders.

The chief event of Baldwin's 1924–29 term was the General Strike, which would have brought revolution in any other country, but passed off calmly because of the good sense of the people.

The 1929–31 Labour Government, like its predecessor, made no attempt to introduce large-scale Socialism, and a so-called National Government was formed under MacDonald after the banking and unemployment crisis. MacDonald had manipulated an astonishing political manœuvre, fully revealed by his Chancellor, Viscount Snowden, in his subsequent Memoirs. This was quite unknown to the public at the time, and has received little publicity in this country since.

The Liberal Party was now of no consequence as a political force and the views of its parliamentary members could not be distinguished from those of their right-wing colleagues. No Government lacking representatives from the now very large workers' organisations could, of course, claim to be " National " with any truth, but the label proved very useful to those who wore it. Baldwin succeeded MacDonald, and Chamberlain Baldwin, but the policy of inaction at home and abroad remains unchanged.

For eighteen years there had been no real attempt to deal with unemployment, the distressed areas, the reorganisation of economic and social life and the revival of the export trade. The disasters in foreign affairs are dealt with in a later chapter.

Throughout this period the men controlling the State have been mediocrities or worse. They were poorly prepared for their great responsibilities, their knowledge of foreign affairs being confined to pre-war Europe, which has ceased to exist. The great majority of them belonged to a pre-war generation, and were out of sympathy with the ideas and needs of the returned fighting men, while their lack of appeal to the younger generation was and is notorious.

None of them had achieved anything of note apart from personal success, and their ruling strategy was that of survival. Compared with men like Gladstone, Salisbury, Disraeli, and Pitt they were clearly of an inferior type. This was not because of any lack of able men in the country. These, however, had turned

from politics in disgust and were expending their energies in the services of the State or in industry and commerce.

At meetings I attended, addressed by the national leaders, I was struck by the ineptness of their speeches and programmes. They had simply no idea of how to talk to the masses in their own language. Fluent enough, they were expert in ambiguities and in turning awkward corners, but there was nothing of that compelling sincerity springing from burning conviction which alone is capable of reaching the hearts of the masses. The electors voted for these people as the lesser of conflicting evils and what acclamation they ever received was because of tradition, politeness, and respect to their office and not for the men. This was indeed as true of the party officials as of the people, and the veterans of every party made scathing comments on the decline of the standard of leadership.

At the public demonstrations organised at great expense for these men, it was and is difficult to obtain big crowds—this itself being a decisive proof of the apathy into which the masses have fallen as a result of continual disillusionment.

As a working man on Tyneside, going with my friends to these affairs, expecting some message of hope and a decisive policy that would put an end to needless injustice and despair, I have always been disappointed and shocked. As these men have sowed, so shall they reap. Most of them are already condemned to obscurity by the verdict of history, though it is only a few years since they ruled the country. Hardly anyone can even now name the members of the first post-war Cabinets. These men and their successors under-estimated the insight of the masses, which is great so far as the personality of a political leader is concerned. A great public meeting has a personality of its own which is a different entity to that of the sum of individuals composing it. This personality has a feminine intuition which can read the heart of the man who speaks to it, no matter how clever he may be in evasions and hypocrisies. For

to-day, as always, it is not brains which move the great mass of mankind, but faith and will.

The Governments of old men and opportunists have betrayed the men who came back from the war, covered with imperishable glory, who were promised " a land fit for heroes "—a cynical mockery. They have betrayed the unemployed millions ; the poverty-stricken workers denied a decent wage and life ; the millions denied security of employment ; the young folk denied a chance of building a decent life for themselves and those they love ; the millions of women whose lives and homes are wrecked by poverty and unemployment ; the children denied educational opportunity—no state can be fully democratic which reserves the highest posts in its service for a tiny minority of its citizens, whose capacity is not to be compared with that of the ablest of the workers. And the hundreds of millions of British citizens throughout the world affected by the weakness of our foreign policy.

My struggles to educate myself first showed me the terrible narrowness of the educational ladder in England. If I was finally successful in reaching Oxford I knew well that it was because of the good luck which pursued me. As a young man on the dole marriage was denied me, for I would not ask a woman to share the mental torture of life below the poverty line. Indeed, all this period, when employed at casual, ill-paid work, and then drawing unemployed benefit for two years, and afterwards, when I had been struck off the register by the officials, was a dark episode towards which I cannot look back without horror. I can honestly say that there was no happy day for me in this time. There was no joy in creative work, in healthy competition, no task in which I could set my chained-up energy, no one to whom I was willing to open my heart. Everything was repressed. For years before I went to Oxford I never had a good meal, although I did not realise this until I was in Oxford, where I got away from the 15s. 3d. a week standard.

All around me in the north of England were the evidences of family demoralisation brought by unemployment. No proverb is more true that that which allies familiarity and contempt.

I was only one of many, many thousands, it must be understood. It was not that the physical hardships of unemployment were so hard to bear—we rarely thought of them as hardships. It was the mental strain of insult, innuendo, humiliation, and servility that burned in our brains. God help a sensitive soul exposed to this cruel and evil world without physical strength and without hope. I never wept then, but I have wept since for some of the men and women I left in the shadows.

These dark years brought home to me the magnitude of the life-work of Jesus, who was able to maintain his code in face of such people as those who surrounded me. My closest friends were books. Could a human rat be a Christian? My mentors—Schopenhauer, Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Stirner, Le Bon—answered no. I never turned towards the organised Church for consolation or escape. Yet I believed in escape—for myself and the thousands with me—from this unjust underworld in which our young lives were dying. I turned towards politics, about which I knew little, save that I believed in the masses, in the young men and women of Britain. I was, then as now, rooted in the masses—one of the million—and indeed no one in the world need claim a higher title than that of working-man—Jesus himself, when asked who he was, said: "The Son of Man," and his greatest biographer was faithful to this description.

There was much evil around me on Tyneside, but more good, and much of the evil was due to circumstances and human weakness. A man who has never been poor cannot make all the allowances for such things, because he cannot think of them. But indeed one's compassion should be without bounds for the poor and the wretched.

Most rich people I have met who wish to help the poor think that their physical distress is the greatest burden,

and think only of relieving that, sometimes to be shocked at the poor return for their kindness. But, indeed, they misjudge the poor, just as so many people underestimate the intelligence of a child. It is the freeing of the human personality that is all important—the giving of a useful place in the world to the men and women born for such a destiny. Physical hardships, lack of money, food, and poor clothing—these come a long way behind. Thus the soldier with his fourteen shillings a week pay is ten times happier than the unemployed man with twice as much, and the wife of a man earning only thirty shillings a week has very different thoughts from the wife of the unemployed man receiving the same amount.

From 1931 on I was in the thick of the struggle for Socialism on Tyneside. What was I fighting for? I took little heed of printed programmes and party blue-books, but spoke what was in my heart to the meetings I addressed all over Northumberland and Durham. They understood me well enough, for I spoke in their own language and their life and their struggles were my own. I attacked the Labour leaders with vehemence at South Shields, North Shields, Wallsend, Jarrow, Newcastle, Willington, and elsewhere, and some of the officials were shocked. But I was never silenced, for I had demanded complete freedom of action, and in any case I was not important enough to be worth worrying about. On big occasions I could be overlooked, and I was certainly making converts with my speeches.

Agents of the Mosley-led New Party asked me to lead their movement in South Shields, but I could not believe in Mosley. Our principal fight was against the new repressive measures aimed at the unemployed. There were demonstrations, and sometimes we took the law into our own hands. I was no Communist, but was frequently approached by the Red leaders with offers of a job as a propagandist. I was offered a training course at the Red Political Academy in Moscow. I refused all these offers, and was then attacked by the Communists. I was threatened with violence one

Sunday at a meeting in the Marsden Miners' Hall. I was running several educational classes for the workless, giving my services to help train the minds of the young men I knew we needed, and the Communists attempted to break up these classes, without success.

The formation of a Right Coalition Government under MacDonald and Thomas in 1931 showed the workers that I had been right in denouncing their leaders. Events moved swiftly. I was approached to stand for the coming Borough Council elections. Meeting followed meeting. The Means Test was applied and the area was in a state of ferment. Thousands of people marched in the demonstrations. Right-wing Councillors were offered police protection in certain towns.

But I had to leave the north to take up an Oxford scholarship, which came as a bolt from the blue.

At Oxford I continued my political work, aided by other worker-students and friends in other colleges. There were several hundred Fascists in the city, and their parades and meetings were very successful. I decided that the first task was to defeat this movement. There were clashes and scenes of violence, but eventually we were successful. One night, with my friend Terence McCarthy, I went to a film show organised by the Blackshirts, who were presenting the Italian Fascist propaganda film, " The Blackshirt." We were the only two Socialists among three hundred Fascists, and we had been challenged to go. We went and refused to sing their song, eventually getting out without injury. On other occasions we were less fortunate. But by the summer of 1934 Fascism was beaten in Oxford, and the local Socialist Party, whose municipal elections I organised, was stronger than ever before.

I tried hard to prevent other scholarship students from joining the Communist Party, which began its main attack on Oxford in 1933. I influenced some students, but in spite of my entreaties two Ruskin College men joined up with the Communists. One of them went to Russia afterwards and is a Communist

propagandist. I was also in difficulties from another side. I was in the University Cavalry Squadron throughout the time I was at Oxford, having transferred from a northern infantry O.T.C. Indeed, I have been in various sections of the Army Reserve since 1930. The Principal of my College, Mr. Barratt Brown, was an ardent pacifist, and had been imprisoned during the war as a conscientious objector. I was compelled to hide my training activities from him, and this was not easy, as sometimes the Squadron rode past our college at breakfast-time, under the dining-room windows, in mufti, but with rifle buckets and swords. I was also compelled to climb out of an upper window in riding kit, down a rainpipe, for this early morning training, as the main gate of the college was locked.

I had some narrow escapes from recognition but, amazingly enough, the secret was kept to the end, and my friends in the Squadron did not betray me, although some of them hated my ideas, for I was working for peace all the time I was in Oxford, sometimes in over-flamboyant ways.

After I had been challenged to go to Russia by Lord Nuffield, a very high dignitary of the Communist International came to Oxford to " make me an offer," which would also involve the rejection of the challenge. But I had already given my word and refused to see the Comintern man.

After my return from Russia the true nature of the Communists, who up to then had been periodically offering me jobs, was revealed. I was loaded with every epithet of abuse they could find, and when I spoke at meetings about Russia I came to expect disorder and organised rowdyism. I challenged the two chief Communist leaders, Pollitt and Hannington, to a public " show-down " on Russia, but they refused to accept.

In London I found that few of the University Socialists seemed to have retained their beliefs. They were mostly concerned only about finding jobs and were finding the

world a much harsher place than they had imagined. For my part, I had ceased to notice that harshness, which I had had to face when I left school at fifteen.

London Society struck me as tepid and shallow. The bizarre amusements of the wealthy and the younger upper class did not attract me. Conversation and intelligence at the literary parties and among the "intellectuals" of Bloomsbury and Hampstead were well below standards I had found elsewhere. A chaos of opinion about religion, morals, politics, and art had followed the war; and the young people were all in love with theories without being willing to accept the discipline which accompanies them.

The extremists inside the Labour Party disliked me, and at some conferences I attended there were exchanges of abuse.

Various little political parties asked me to join them and take over their propaganda work, but I was not interested in anything which was only concerned with sectional grievances, however honest these were. Politics was for me not an occupation or a diversion, but a means to an end, and that end must involve the liberation of the poor and sorrow-carrying and unfortunate millions of my fellow countrymen.

Early in July, 1935, I was rung up one morning by Lord De La Warr, now Lord Privy Seal, but then Under-Secretary in the Government, who invited me to come to see him at the Colonial Office. He introduced me to Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, then Secretary for the Colonies, and there was a discussion on my political beliefs. De La Warr said: "You are a Nationalist and a Socialist?" I said this was so, and he said that this represented his own political beliefs. He described the difficulties facing them in organising the young workers behind their party and said that he himself was already fully occupied by his Ministerial post. Lord De La Warr asked me if I would accept a "National" seat. The question of financial backing, he said, would not provide difficulties. There was no need to give a decision

now. I could think it over, as there was no hurry. He cited the example of a young friend recently elected to Parliament who had just received an important post in the Government.

I said I was a member of the Labour Party and had been recently offered some constituencies, but I was asked to join them again at lunch, " just to talk things over " at the Hotel Metropole on July 17. I did so. MacDonald and De La Warr were accompanied by the Rev. Herbert Dunnico, former deputy-Speaker of the House of Commons.

I was again offered a seat, but told them that in the intervening week I had already decided to fight Devonport for the Labour Party. MacDonald was angry and talked about " wasting his time," but De La Warr took this news in a more sporting spirit. There was still time to change my mind, he said, and in any case I could not hope to beat Hore-Belisha, who had been the member for twelve years and was better known than ever now that he was a Minister. Dunnico seemed irritated, but I was unabashed. The initiative had not come from me. When De La Warr said good-bye he told me I was condemning myself to obscurity for a number of years, and no doubt he was right.

The most remarkable feature of this incident to me was that several people I knew, and who had been associated with the left-wing movement for many years, advised me to accept a Government seat. When I told them what had happened they also said it was a great opportunity that might never come again. Adherence to principles was apparently only an academic subject when it came down to facts. One man said : " You believe in the Empire and the Communists hate you—you'll never be happy where you are. And you know how many enemies you've got. If I was you I'd take it on, and you'll be able to laugh at them all."

On a visit to Oxford, where I had to address a club meeting on Russia, a plan to abduct me when I came out of the Clarendon Hotel and throw me in the river

was made by the Communists, but Ian Harvey, of Christchurch, chairman of my meeting, forestalled them by booking a room for me at the hotel, so that it was not necessary for me to leave without an escort. Harvey also took effective measures to prevent disorder at this meeting, at which the Reds were present in force.

The Government now declared a general election. Having obtained the support of all parties for sanctions against Italy, it was a most propitious moment. Mr. Baldwin continued to tell the electorate that he was a plain, honest man. Mr. Eden threatened Italy with terrible penalties at Geneva. Within a regrettably short time after the election the Cabinet had agreed to give large slices of Abyssinia to Italy, Mussolini had won the war, and the Government called off sanctions, but as Sir Samuel Hoare had temporarily vanished, Mr. Baldwin was able to maintain his opinion about being a plain, honest man, and the unemployed were again forgotten about.

I flew to Devonport to open my election campaign against Hore-Belisha—a successful Jewish journalist, then Minister of Transport. After examining Hore-Belisha's record and speeches in Hansard, I challenged him to a public hearing in the constituency, but he did not even reply, and when I heard that he was to speak to his supporters at the Hore-Belisha Hall in Devonport I decided to attend. None of my friends even knew I was in the town. The meeting was attended only by my opponents, so I was compelled to go in a mackintosh with the collar turned up, and with a cloth cap pulled over my eyes to avoid recognition. The hall was packed, and I sat in the front row. I listened to the Minister's speech without interrupting, and when questions were called for I took off my cap and said: "My name is John Brown. I want to know this of Mr. Belisha. Is he prepared to meet me on a public platform in Devonport?" There was a tremendous uproar, and I was compelled to interrupt the speaker's reply. As I was being seized by my coat, I threw it off, and asked for

permission to confront the Minister on the platform. In my pocket were other questions I wished to ask, but a posse of stewards seized me and held my arms and pockets. There was now pandemonium in the hall, but the chairman, Sir William Mountstephen, eventually secured something like order. The Minister said: "I think that the gentleman who asked me that question labours under a misapprehension as to his relationship to myself. Any constituent of mine is entitled to any explanation from me at any time. Mr. Brown is not a constituent of mine. I do not see why I should gather an audience for Mr. Brown in Devonport to come on my platform and say whatever he pleases. He apparently has quite a lot to say about me personally. I think the best place for him to say it is where he says it now—on the doorstep."

The chairman then asked for a vote on whether the present member was suitable for re-election. I was the sole dissentient.

There were some further exchanges between me and the platform, and I was now surrounded by stewards and angry Liberals. Above the din I shouted for a hearing. Mr. Hore-Belisha said: "As Mr. Brown will appreciate in the course of time, I shall answer any question that is put to me to the best of my ability." I said: "Why don't you answer this one now?" indicating my written question, based on Hansard.

After some more words I was restrained by the stewards from asking any questions or producing the papers I had intended to show the meeting, after a general mêlée in front of the platform, and I was forcibly ejected. Pressmen ran out after me and told me the incident would seriously prejudice my chances in the election, and told me the attitude that their papers would take. One said: "I admire your courage, old man, but this will set you a long way back." I told them I knew they were right, but I had to follow the dictates of my conscience. They shook hands with me and went back.

I threw all my energy into the campaign, and soon made many new friends. Thousands of the workers were living in horrible slums and I was taken to see war-heroes dying of tuberculosis in old little houses which recalled rabbit-warrens. People called on me every day and I was occupied with a mass of cases requiring immediate attention. The dockyarders and navy men knew I was no little Englander, and many of them came on my platforms. I even had an offer from a Rear-Admiral who was willing to speak for me, Mr. Hore-Belisha paid his agent a cheque for £910, but I had no money, and funds were collected in house to house visits.

I could have wished for no more loyal band of workers than the men and women who joined me here. I could look for no help from anyone but them as there was no Socialist paper in the area, and the local Press was united against me.

I repeated my challenge to Hore-Belisha, and always kept an empty chair for him on my platform, but he never appeared.

Some of the meetings were lively, and after one open air rally I was struck and spat upon by a woman. I was under the necessity of earning a living during the campaign, and this was a serious handicap, of course, but Harry Wright, my agent, a naval dockyard worker, performed his difficult task with great energy and talent.

I told the electors quite clearly that I was a Nationalist and a Socialist, and would make no promises to them that I could not fulfil. To the horror of some people I told the crowds that I was a pacifist, but a pacifist of the Army Reserve, and I also made it clearly understood that I was no apologist for blunders of previous Governments.

On one occasion my attitude gave serious offence to an ex-Minister (not my opponent) and there were some hot exchanges between us. He stood in the centre of a committee room and struck an attitude. The men around me all supported my opinions, but were afraid

of a " scene " and intervened with conciliatory remarks. There was another incident in the next town when another Cabinet Minister with an outsize reputation arrived, apparently expecting to be fawned upon for some reason, but this time only one man overheard our rather peculiar interview.

The attacks of the Right Press were serious. A great national penny daily accused me of being a Communist, which I had never been, and the correction was not printed until five days after the poll. Another national newspaper accused me of breaking the Armistice Day election truce by sending a fleet of cars round the district bearing placards : " We demand fair play for the motorists, etc." Actually, these cars were sent around by some wealthy non-Socialist Scotsman with a personal grievance, and I knew nothing about them, and would have opposed the idea if I had. I was also accused of making a scene at the Armistice Service, which I attended only to lay a wreath on the War Memorial !

I disapproved of tactics of violence against my opponent and I am glad to say that there was no trouble of that kind. In spite of the Press campaigns, my meetings were all crowded to overflow, and there were several thousand people at my final demonstration. Three thousand marched behind us through the streets to sing a version of " John Brown's Body " at the Guildhall. I had been in hundreds of workers' homes and knew all their problems. Harry Wright had enrolled two thousand men and women on his forms, but the fight was always unequal, and the newspaper lie about being and having been a Communist was a serious blow, for many people believed it. It was ironical, for I had been devoting time to the crushing of Communism, as I am now.

The Council of Action, under Lloyd George, sent me many invitations to join up and some of the letters I received were reminiscent of the best London stores sale's talks. A considerable body of Labour Party

candidates, I was reminded, believed in the Council. But I did not. There was a great deal of rank but no file in the Council of Action. And I was suspicious of a programme that advocated a large number of new conferences. I had grown up with conferences going on all around me for years, and all I could see in the way of achievement was a large network of new Labour Exchanges, which did not even have architectural points to commend them. I sent the Council of Action *my* policy and said this was what I stood for, in case they were interested. There was no answer.

The electors gave me nearly ten thousand votes, which was a record Socialist poll for the division, and I reduced Hore-Belisha's majority by some thousands. He had polled over 20,000 votes. In the days following the belated Press corrections appeared and journalists told me the orders they had been given as to my treatment during the campaign, which were illuminating.

There was now nothing to keep me in England and I went abroad again to continue my interrupted work. But I took with me the memory of brave men and women who had given prodigally of their time and energy and their small earnings, who had refused considerable sums so that they could work with me, and who had risked losing their jobs and created new difficulties for themselves simply because they shared my views. And I liked them best because they were undismayed and cheerful in defeat.

CHAPTER TWO

FOREIGN POLICY

UNDER THE STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER THE BRITISH Commonwealth is a League of Nations without sanctions. Here is a real, a marvellous democracy without any element of coercion. Nor was this, the first and only successful League of Nations in the world, seized by violence and rapine.

The Yorkshireman, Captain James Cook, was no filibuster, but a courageous pioneer and map-maker. The men who followed him had to fight wild beasts, cannibals, drought, boredom, fearful storms, the dangers of the desert, starvation, and fever, to bring civilisation to the unknown continent of Australia.

The British, sturdy sons of the religious settlers, were compelled to move into Canada when the French soldiers built a chain of forts across the land they had invaded. Thirty-one years old General Wolfe defeated the French and laid the foundations of a great nation.

In the great days of Elizabeth, our East India merchants were opening up trade with the Orient, a trade which was envied by the French. Rivalry between skippers and traders ended in French military intervention—an offshoot of their dream of world conquest. Clive was called in by the natives, be it remembered. At Arcot he had only 200 Englishmen against 10,000 French-led natives. In fact the whole campaign was most un-Marxian. The French were defeated so that our trade could continue in peace. Afterwards we were called upon to take control when

insane and debauched tyrants made themselves unbearable to their people. Had we left India the country would have been invaded by savages and would have been ravaged by war for two centuries. Our withdrawal to-day, after we have brought roads, industry, civilisation and peace to the brown millions would mean civil war.

New Zealand would have remained the home of cannibals and savages had it not been for our bold colonists sailing across the world to carry the learning and arts of the cold northern lands. Again we were unsuccessfully challenged by French military ambition —in 1840—and only a generation later the colonists had their own Government.

The story of South Africa is more stormy. The Dominion could not be created before 20,000 of our men had given their lives and 200 millions had been spent. But to the eternal credit of the victors, the peace terms were the fairest in the world's history, and to-day there are no more loyal imperialists than such men as General Smuts, who fought against us under Kruger, while the World War showed the South African States happily united under the Dominion flag with the Mother Country.

The latter part of the twentieth century was dominated by the shadow of Rhodes, who gave his name to a country of three-quarters of a million square miles. This silent, tubercular boy, suffering from heart attacks all his short life, a farmer at seventeen, an undergraduate at twenty, a business man at twenty-four, who lived in a tiny room, and never had any personal possessions, planned the Cape to Cairo line, was Premier of the Cape, and added vast new lands to the Empire, believed that it was the English-speaking people that God had brought to flower : they followed the highest ideal of justice, liberty and peace. If he was to serve God he must work for the unity and extension of influence of the English-speaking race. Rhodes was right. To-day, from the Cape to the Zambesi, when one asks who started that industry, who built that, who did that, the answer

is Rhodes. Of his beyond-Africa dreams nothing could come, for his time was too short. But he left a message : " It is ridiculous to lose one's ideas by death," and as he died, he cried : " So much to do—so little done ! "

Rhodes has had worthy successors, even if he remains unequalled. What was his aim in life ? " To work for the furtherance of the British Empire, for bringing the whole world under British rule, for the recovery of the United States, for one Empire of the Anglo-Saxon race, so as to render wars impossible and promote the best interests of humanity. What a dream ! Yet it is possible ! "

How strange these words sound to-day against the caterwauling background of opportunist politicians, with their policies of contraction, procrastination, " face-saving," withdrawal, cheese-paring, apology, " give away the colonies," and peace with dishonour ! Compared with Oxford's greatest and most un-Oxfordlike son, who has stamped himself eternally there as in Africa, they are indeed pitiful pigmies. It is necessary to look at their record since the Armistice.

In the politics of the British Commonwealth foreign policy is of first importance, for we are not only a nation, but an Empire, not only an Empire, but a working League of Nations, not only a working League of Nations, but the only hope of an oppressed world. To those who say that local matters should take precedence over foreign affairs I say : " You would be right—if we were Patagonians or Peruvians." For, indeed, our task is not to live for ourselves—animals can do as much —but to continue the work of the men and women who preceded us. Their ideal was to make Britain "the great nation," which would illumine the world by its virtues and achievements rather than by its armed might. They succeeded, to such an extent that the Union Jack is spread to-day over a fourth of the globe. Democracy was challenged again in 1914 by the military power of Germany, and Europe was again only saved from dictatorship by the intervention of Britain.

After the war, in which the best men of the young generation were killed, the pigmies and platform cheapjacks found themselves almost unchallenged, save by the politically weak Socialists, who were themselves to be tricked by their own leaders.

Lloyd George, who had done admirable work in organising the country for war, had visions of a peace of moderation, but was guilty of political opportunism in the " Hang the Kaiser " election of 1918, while the maintenance of the blockade for months after the Armistice was a crime against innocent women and children. He arrived in Paris for the Peace Conference encumbered with pledges to the electorate which could never be redeemed. He was imprisoned by the heat he had himself generated. In him the politician was always struggling with the statesman, and after the war the statesman was entangled in the nets thrown by the politician. One of the greatest mistakes was committed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in 1919, when the German delegates signed the peace treaty, admitting German war guilt in the face of a threat of an immediate advance of troops into their country. This branding of a whole people was an unjust and wrong move, for it was not the German working men and women who started the war, but the Kaiser, the Prussian militarists, and diplomats. It was such blunders as these which proved such valuable weapons to the Nazi agitators.

No less than 100 millions was wasted in a half-hearted attempt at Tsarist restoration, which was directly opposed by British public opinion and was, indeed, strongly criticised by leaders of our forces in North Russia. The endeavours of the Premier to dragoon the Irish Nationalists into submission were also unsuccessful, and the campaign of reprisals was denounced by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lloyd George's next foreign adventure was his backing of the Greeks in their invasion of Turkey. Our soldiers were against this campaign and were all agreed that the Greek position was extremely unsound. The Greeks

were defeated, but Lloyd George's attitude was unchanged. On September 29, 1922, a " Conference of Ministers " sent an ultimatum to General Sir Charles Harington, the British commander at Constantinople. Wisely, Sir Charles decided not to present this, and continued his negotiations with the Turks, which proved successful, and the Lausanne Treaty was signed in 1923. Harington's brains alone stood between the British public and a war on behalf of some ambitious Greeks.

At the Spa Reparations Conference the London Government agreed to accept 22 per cent of what might be recovered from Germany, against 52 per cent to France, and also bowed to the French estimate of what Germany could pay (£6,000,000,000), although this was ridiculed by British economists.

The next crisis was occasioned by the Ruhr occupation. Poincaré succeeded Briand as French Premier in January, 1922, mainly because he could be trusted to take a firm line with Germany. He opened a violent anti-German campaign, which spread all over France, concentrating on the legal rights of peace treaties, and demanding payment of the war debts and reparations, already in default. Bonar Law was now Premier, and attempted to dissuade Poincaré from occupying the German Ruhr with French soldiers, as he had threatened. Poincaré refused to listen. Had the British Government taken a strong line here there is no doubt that the French would have been compelled to abandon this project. It is only necessary to say here that the survival of France as a great power was entirely dependent upon British friendship, as in 1914. The London Government, however, did nothing further, and the French marched into the Ruhr on January 11, 1923, demanding their money. This move made inevitable the rise of an extremist movement in Germany, as indeed it would have done in any great country thus occupied by foreign and coloured troops. All the good work accomplished by the League of Nations since 1919 in smoothing out differences was undone in a day. A hundred Germans

were killed, thousands imprisoned, and 140,000 men, women, and children arbitrarily deported during the next few months. An attempt was even made by the French to create a nominally independent French protectorate in wholly German territory, but this was defeated by the inhabitants.

Meanwhile, our vacillating policy in the Far and Middle East gave rise to fresh disorders.

In 1924 Ramsay MacDonald was Premier and Foreign Minister. He continued to drag Britain behind the wheels of the French chariot, and there was still no hope of a European settlement, although the German Foreign Minister, Herr Stresemann, a man of vision and capacity, was prepared to face odium in his own country for the sake of peace in Europe.

On December 1, 1925, the Locarno Treaties were signed, by which Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium renounced war on one another and agreed to come to the aid of any one of them attacked. Sir Austen Chamberlain was rightly praised for this easing of the European situation, although, indeed, Stresemann had an infinitely more difficult task, but the British Foreign Secretary apparently thought that these pieces of paper would suffice to cover all the old wounds. He also accelerated the British drift into the French camp, so that for the next twelve years we were to be involved in every blunder of the Quai d'Orsay.

A blind eye was turned towards Mussolini's bombardment of Corfu. The promised entry of Germany into the League was retarded by legal obstacles, and Britain continued to disarm, while France and other great powers were building vast fleets, armies and lines of forts.

Chamberlain revealed his weakness in failing to deal with the Russian Communist propaganda in this country and the Empire during the next few years, which was very considerable, and helped to create the strike wave of 1926. It was left to Sir William Joynson-Hicks to clear these people and their apparatus out of the country.

The Premier was compelled to tell the House that the Government had found proof that agents were working with the Soviet Mission in subversive propaganda in Britain and abroad.

Over the next few years every German appeal for equality of rights was disregarded by the London Governments, which continued to follow the French lead, and the French were resolved to keep the Germans on their knees indefinitely. Conference followed conference, but nothing of the slightest importance to the working people was ever achieved by the politicians.

In 1931 the Japanese decided that the Western economic crisis made the time propitious for an advance into Manchuria. The League, lacking any coercive authority, had already failed to impose disarmament on the world, and its capacity to organise sanctions against an aggressor was now challenged. China appealed to the League and demands for League action arose from all parts of the world. The League spokesmen worked for delays, and the Lytton Commission was sent out. But by the time the report was published the Japanese had set up the puppet state of Manchukuo. League protests were followed by the Japanese invasion of Jehol. The paper challenges were laughed at by the Japanese, who withdrew from the League. No sanctions were imposed and nothing was done. It was a disaster to League prestige. But at the very beginning of the war, the American Secretary of State had signified his willingness to co-operate in effective action. He was counting, of course, on British support. To the astonishment of the American people, Simon, the British Foreign Secretary, took no notice of the American attitude, and Japanese observers in the House of Commons said that he could present the Japanese case better than they could !

British prestige was seriously affected in the Far East, and I have listened to some horrible stories from our returned officials about this period.

Throughout the next two years foreign policy was

dominated by the changes in Germany, as no one now expected anything from the repeated Conferences of international lawyers and windbags.

The Disarmament Conference was a failure from the beginning, and the rapid armament of Germany cast a lurid light on our own defence position, now seriously weakened by continual cutting of the estimates. The Nazis proceeded to tear up every treaty and pact signed by their predecessors, Hitler usually choosing a Saturday or Sunday for the announcements, so that the maximum of world Press publicity could be gained.

The British public was treated to the unedifying spectacle of their two Foreign Ministers—for we now had two—Eden having been made Minister for League of Nations Affairs, following the storms of criticism of Foreign Secretary Simon—running about the capitals of Europe in search of a policy. For nothing could be more patent than that the London Cabinet had no policy of any kind to meet the new situation, apart from concessions, such as the 35 per cent naval agreement with Hitler. The French hastened to conclude a treaty with the Bolsheviks against Germany and with Mussolini concerning a German invasion of Austria. Mussolini seized the opportunity to speed up the Abyssinian preparations and to ask Laval for assurance of French neutrality as a *quid pro quo*. Thousands of Italian soldiers passed through the Suez Canal every week, but nothing was done to avert the war. American newspapers said that everyone knew Italy was going to invade Abyssinia after the rainy season—save the British Cabinet.

Germany had already left the League, and introduced conscription in March, 1935. The French retaliated by increasing her conscription period from one year to two. Armaments rose on a prodigious scale throughout the world, but in face of these new dangers the only British move was to increase the air force—over a three years period! Hoare succeeded Simon as Foreign Secretary in June, 1935, and shared responsibility with

Eden for foreign policy. Eden was applauded for defending League principles in Geneva speeches just before the 1935 general election, but the speeches read very strangely in the light of after events. For after the Italians marched into Abyssinia Hoare and Laval, the French Premier, agreed in Paris to attempt to settle the war by handing over large slices of Abyssinia to Mussolini. The Baldwin Cabinet agreed to these proposals on December 9 and 10—shameful days in our political history. The election was only three weeks behind. Fortunately, Britain has a free Press, and the tremendous storm of protest from all over the country at this gross betrayal of every principle fought for in 1914–18 brought about Hoare's resignation, and the Cabinet was forced to disavow its decision.

Hoare and the Cabinet had here been working according to the standards of the pre-war diplomacy, but we had given the flower of a generation to help destroy that diplomacy, and had passed beyond those conceptions.

The League was now very strong against Mussolini on paper, but his deliberately vague threats and bluff of war were never challenged. It was clear to the world that while we had been tied to French foreign policy since the war, and had been the only great power to disarm on a large scale, we were in reality bearing the whole weight of collective security on our own shoulders. But we were by no means so disarmed that an effective lead could not have been given—a lead that was looked for by every nation in the world, without exception. The Abyssinian war could have been prevented early in 1935 by the mere threat of British or League intervention in the Suez Canal. Even had this not been done, Mussolini, facing a grave economic crisis, was in no position to resist any really serious challenge. A strong economic blockade would have finished the motorised war in a few weeks. In the last resort, the British could have blown the Italian fleet out of the water in a few hours, to say nothing of our

allies. Mussolini is an astute politician, who, like Hitler and the rest of the dictators, places no faith in treaties. An expert in bluff, his moody challenges and self-induced hysteria has proved as successful as in the case of the German Chancellor. Abyssinia was conquered, and to the German and Russian world-propaganda campaigns against Britain for world domination was added the Italian campaign in Eastern Europe, Spain, Africa, Palestine and India.

Italian participation in the Palestine revolt of 1936 and in the Spanish War is already proved. In May, 1937, we were compelled to send 50,000 British and Indian troops to the North-West Frontier of India because a holy war, supported by arms and money from Italian Libya, had been proclaimed against Britain. Shortly before this Mussolini, in Libya, had proclaimed himself the champion of Islam, and at the same time the Libyan Mullahs began to send money and arms to their co-religionists on the North-West Frontier, commanded by the Fakir of Ipi.

Here again our prestige is affected. For although the Durand line is our frontier *de jure*, we have failed to make it so *de facto*. Our Indian Army officers have been concerned about this state of affairs for years, although little is known about this problem in England. While Waziristan is really only British territory in the vicinity of the roads we have built, and the continual punitive expeditions are no substitute for the peace and order administration that it is our duty to give to the province.

But Waziristan is only one of a dozen examples that might be given of what one staff officer of Sir Philip Chetwode has called "imperial ingrowing toe-nails." In 1936 I was a guest of two of our crack cavalry regiments, and I heard stories, which I am bound in honour not to repeat, from some officers which made me boil with impotent rage.

As the British Ministers had been most active in threatening League action against Italy in 1935–36, the chief discredit fell upon them after the fall of Addis

Ababa. As a face-saving gesture, the London Cabinet at last accepted the advice of its naval, military, and air force advisers and decided on rearmament. As things are, this rearmament will still leave us at a relative disadvantage compared to other great powers, considering the gigantic areas and enormous frontiers apportioned to our defence forces, which are in fact an international police force.

British prestige touched its lowest point since the Peace Conference, and new disorders threatened on all sides. The dictator states came out into the open with challenges and insults, and all over Europe the national leaders hurried to conclude fresh alliances against the war felt to be approaching.

In 1936 the Spanish civil war began, and with it another series of diplomatic defeats. The initiative had long since passed from the democratic states to the dictatorships, and the world watched official German and Italian intervention and the massacre of defenceless civilians in the air attacks, while Britain refused to supply the legal Government of the republic with arms, so that the Spaniards were driven into the arms of Soviet Russia.

Twenty years after the world war, in which the British people displayed all their old heroic courage and determination, Europe is again divided, her nations armed to the teeth and hurling insults and threats at each other, while throughout the world the new weapon of propaganda is being used against us with deadly effect. And in the East is the sprawling mass of Communist Russia, her Bolshevik dictators controlling the largest armed forces ever created by one state, planning the catastrophes which will be their opportunity to destroy freedom, democracy, Christianity, and the rights of the individual throughout the world.

It is an evil story, this record of the old men to whom our returning armies gave power after war. The road of the old men was not the road to power for the British Commonwealth ; but the road to betrayal,

the coward's road—the road to the surrender of our imperial heritage and self-respect.

When the history of these twenty years comes to be written it will make bad reading—the worst chapter since the stupidity of George III lost us America.

But if the old men and the professional politicians, from whose faltering fingers the reins of the State are slipping to-day, have failed, there is still time to write another chapter on the face of Europe. No man of my generation believes in the old men—but we believe in ourselves.

CHAPTER THREE

FOREIGN POLICY (*continued*)

THE BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY OF TO-MORROW MUST be, first and foremost, a *forward* policy. It must be a clean break from the so-called policies operated by the miserable gangs of party hacks who have run the country since the war.

To-day we of the British Empire are no longer regarded as holding the initiative in world affairs. Foreign leaders, such as General Ludendorff, are prophesying the imminent collapse of our Empire and our relegation to the ranks of the third-rate powers. Our first task will be to restore this initiative.

Our foreign policy which will illumine our way of destiny in the twentieth century must be clearly stated by the head of the Government, either in London or at Geneva—either place will do. So far from it being dependent on the criticisms or amendments of Germans, Italians, French, or Chilians, it must be decisive and authoritative both in form and content.

The first question to be dealt with is that of the handing over of the colonies, won for us by our armies in the war, to Germany or other Fascist states. This must be closed for ever by one final refusal to consider such insolent proposals. Here are the facts. Germany ceded her colonial territories irrevocably by Article 119 of the Peace Treaty, not to the League, as is often believed, but to the victorious Allies, who had punished a criminal and wholly unjustified Junker attempt to dominate the world. The League had nothing to do with this

cession, and only came into the picture later, when we agreed to administer our new territories in the interests of the inhabitants, on principles of non-discrimination in trade, and without exploitation. These promises have been faithfully kept, as even the Germans admit.

As for raw materials, if Germany suffers from a lack of them, it is because Hitler and Goering tell them guns are more important than butter. There would be a shortage of raw materials here, in spite of our colonies, if the greater part of the national income was spent on arms! And in fact, the dull statistics which are so rarely examined show that Germany has more raw materials available to-day than in 1929, the best post-war year for German industry.

Nor is it true that there is any discrimination against Germany in raw materials in any of our colonies. Our exporters are only too anxious to get orders, and I can myself promise to obtain any German firm or Nazi organisation all the raw materials it requires at very cheap rates—provided they have the money to pay for them.

The same dull official statistics reveal such interesting facts as Germany's *favourable* balance of trade with East Africa. In the British Cameroons alone 42·5 per cent of import trade and 79·8 per cent of export trade was with Germany in the second year of Hitlerism. Similar figures are available for other African areas. So much for the "cutting off of raw materials" rubbish. All of us would only be too glad to sell goods to Germans if they had any money. That they spend their money on arms is not our fault. Hitler knows these facts, and in *Mein Kampf* described the idea of reclaiming the lost German colonies as "mere silly talk" and "birdlime prepared by Jews to snare silly German finches"! The new Nazi attitude is based on the growing ambition of the leaders, the new military strength, and the hope that British politicians can be bluffed again.

Even if the above facts did not exist, we could not hand Nazi Germany areas of great strategic importance

on our imperial routes. We require continuous territorial connection for our small defence forces to guarantee reinforcement in the event of challenge. To break up that continuity by handing lands to the megalomaniac Nazis would not be the act of a weakling or a crook, but of a madman.

If we in Britain hold these views, they are held with much greater vehemence in the Dominions and Colonies. And as for the former German colonies—the inhabitants are solidly opposed to German rule and solidly anxious to maintain British rule. The plight of unfortunate natives under a military dictatorship of inexperienced gangster-agitators believing in insane theories about race-warfare, can be imagined.

As for " room " and " breathing space " for Germans, Germany is still a very lightly populated country as compared to Belgium or Britain, and the demand for a higher birth-rate in all the Fascist countries shows the hypocrisy of this story. As a final demolition one has only to point to the pre-war position. Germany's raw material imports from her colonies were then (German Statistical Year Book, 1913) 5 per cent, or just one two-hundredth part of her requirements ! Another penny per pound on coffee would be more important. And the average annual emigration from Germany to German colonies from 1903–13 was 40 ! There were thousands more of German subjects in Yorkshire and Lancashire alone on August 4, 1914, than in the whole of the German colonies ! And as to their success as colonial administrators—the unfortunate natives said enough on this point before the gentle and benevolent Nazis had introduced arson into election tactics.

Italy must be told the position of our necessary strategic spheres in the Mediterranean and on the road to India, as there appears to be some uncertainty in Rome on these matters. Italy must be warned in clear terms that any anti-British measure of any kind, propaganda, war, aid to rebels, or threats by Government leaders, will be construed as an open act of hostility,

and treated as such. To-day we could destroy the Italian fleet in a day and isolate the peninsula, while the Fascists are unable to build up to our strength by reason of their fack of economic resources, money and credit. Our air lorce must always be at least three times greater than that of Italy, and the army must be at least brought up to Italian parity level—a concession, as Italy is not the most powerful challenger to our position as a world power.

These measures will prevent a repetition of the 1934–37 insults and threats we have swallowed. The conquest of Abyssinia can be recognised, as it is now a fact.

All Communist and Fascist organisations in this country must be ruthlessly suppressed, with their newspapers, and the members of these parties still professing such views deported to Russia and Italy, where they can reasonably expect to be welcomed.

There can be no political alliance with Russia. Trade agreements—yes—so long as they pay. All Russian imports should be banned in any year that Comintern activity is discovered in the United Kingdom, and measures taken to deal with the thousands of agents of the Communist International now working for revolution and anarchy among the workers in Britain, the Dominions and India.

In the event of a German war on Russia, we must remain aloof. Not a drop of British blood should be spilled on behalf of the dictators. Let the mad dogs tear each other to pieces if they wish. We are only concerned with the empire's progress and with peace—not crazy foreign doctrines.

Our French policy must be modified. We saved France from destruction in 1914 and will save her again if she is suddenly attacked by Germany. But the post-war policy which chained the British Cabinet to Quai d'Orsay intrigues must be snapped. The French must be told the conditions of our continued co-operation. First, a serious effort to settle all outstanding Franco-German differences. Secondly, there must be no return

to the Poincaré policy of gigantic armaments and Ruhr occupations. We shall also not be bound by any agreement made by France with Russia—we cannot fight for Bolsheviks. In this connection the large influence now exerted in French politics by the Communist Party must be given special consideration.

In the Low Countries we must continue our traditional Cromwellian policy of preserving the balance of power, for we cannot stand by and see these countries overrun by a military state. When this has happened Britain has always been in danger of invasion, as when Napoleon maintained a vast "Army of England" at Boulogne, and the Kaiser seized Belgium.

Now we come to the important problem of foreign radio propaganda in the Empire. General Hertzog, the South African Premier, has complained that the Nazi propaganda broadcasts to the African zone are particularly dangerous and that Empire broadcasts were not being received in South Africa of sufficient strength or interest to counteract them. After this the question as to whether the B.B.C. should broadcast in foreign languages was discussed in the summer of 1937. A member of Parliament, Colonel A. W. Goodman, took the lead in demanding Empire broadcasts in Arabic to counteract the continual Italian anti-British broadcasts from the powerful Italian Bari station. The Fascist radio propaganda programme is now similar to that of the Nazis and the Communists, English and Arabic programmes are given daily by the Italians, and the Germans and Russians broadcast in half a dozen languages. The chief of the twelve German propaganda radio stations is Zeesen, which gives a minimum of 50 carefully timed hours of foreign propaganda talks a week. The big Communist stations are in Moscow, and the new Fascist station at Prato Smeraldo, near Rome, will be more powerful than that at Bari. Zeesen is now operating a 24-hour programme, aimed primarily against Britain, and Major Gladstone Murray, whom I know personally, the Director-General of the Canadian

B.B.C., has built two short-wave stations to counteract the effects of these broadcasts. Zeesen sends birthday and other greetings in English to named people in the Dominions every morning, and there is great stress on the Colonial claims. The second Hitler economic plan includes a scheme for another dozen radio stations in this foreign system, which proves its success.

The Comintern, of course, broadcasts its instructions to Bolshevik revolutionaries all over the world, telling them the latest Moscow decisions about strike and disturbance tactics, and the anti-God broadcasts are also well known.

Propaganda of this kind is a hostile act, and can only be met by counter propaganda. In our case this would not be the propaganda of a lie but the propaganda of the truth—the destruction of the Fascist and Communist case and the enlightening of listeners throughout the world as to the real facts. We need never be ashamed or doubtful about what we have done or about what we intend to do, and our mission of peace and civilisation requires publicity on the grandest scale. We must have more powerful stations than any other country, which are, indeed, a necessity in view of our distant interests, and if foreign countries outbuild us again, then we must continue until we have gained final supremacy. In this technical war we need have no doubt as to the result.

Our spreading of the truth about our work and aims must be accompanied by an active propaganda of the written and spoken word in every sphere. What most liberal thinkers seem to forget in discussing propaganda is that originally the word had no sinister meaning, and that the truth will always be more successful than the lie if the most modern advertising methods are adopted. Those people who look askance at such practices would change their ideas if they had to work for a living by selling goods.

And—important—during the war we found the war propaganda weapon operated by men like Northcliffe,

Beaverbook, and H. G. Wells, of the highest value. The German dictator and the commander of the German armies in 1918 have given this work its best testimonials, which are worthy of the closest attention. I have rightly called propaganda a powerful weapon, having seen its effects, and when weapons are used against us we have no choice but to arm. Our propaganda task is to spread the British Empire and its institutions, its special virtues of democracy, sportsmanship, toleration, liberty and justice for all, throughout the world.

There are now five hundred million British subjects in the world. The Imperial Conference of 1937 demonstrated their happiness in possessing this status. We have inherited the task of Rome, which gave citizenship to those who would accept it as a privilege and responsibility. Even S. Paul was proud of this boon. But we have gone far beyond the Roman plans, for we bar no man or woman of whatever colour or creed from citizenship or the protection of the flag. The Pax Romana has been succeeded by the Pax Britannica, already encircling the globe. The dictators are afraid to keep a man with a British passport in their gaols, no matter what his race or colour. How often have I and every other Britisher who moves abroad found this citizenship of value ! We cherish these rights not with jealous exclusiveness, but as a great heritage, and so far from shutting ourselves behind narrow nationalist barriers, we aim at removing them all.

Our policy towards the United States must be one of close co-operation. This great country, which should still be inside the Commonwealth but for the unpardonable mistakes of stupid, gross George III and his Cabinet of titled buffoons, who would have been undistinguished as butlers, is allied to us by ties of blood and spirit. It is no accident that the ruling positions in the country are nearly all filled by men of Anglo-Saxon stock. John Lewis, chief of the workers, commented on this point to me, after describing his own family's origin in Britain. Of Britain's sons, he said, " they belong to

a ruling race," and I admired this truism coming as it did, so unexpectedly, from a man of his views.

The war debts question cannot be left up in the air, but must be amicably settled between the two countries. We cannot allow British credit, which has never been questioned, to incur even the breath of suspicion, and public opinion in both countries has now been educated to a better understanding of the problem.

In China we must re-embark on a policy of active co-operation in order to promote the development of these enormous masses of poor people. In this we shall have the full co-operation of the Chinese Government, already anxious for our support, without which China may become the tool of the southern Communists or the Japanese war lords.

In Central and Eastern Europe an active and adjustable economic and political policy of co-operation with Hungary, and Austria, Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia is necessary, as our sphere of influence must be extended to the Black Sea. This does not mean that we should go to war whenever some bearded ruffian blows up a princeling, and in fact we should withdraw from all " automatic " pledges of intervention. But I know how our influence is needed in these countries and what a decisive factor even our moral weight would mean in a crisis. Nor can we allow Germany and Italy to dominate the Danube valley and the Balkans. The first step towards Balkan federation will be Britain's awakening to the commercial possibilities of this region.

Had we concentrated on this area in 1915, as was once planned, Germany would have been deprived of her allies. Turkey, the traditional Balkan enemy, would have retreated into Asia Minor, as she did later, and the whole of the Balkan States, whose Governments were still juggling with possibilities, would have taken an anti-German line. Their two million soldiers would have been on the southern frontier of Austria, and the whole course of the war altered. As it was, even the

discussions of the south-eastern campaign was a potent factor in bringing Italy into the war on the side of the Allies in that year.

Towards the Empire our policy must be one of the very closest economic and political co-operation. These great lands and peoples require our help and our colonists. A thousand million pounds of our money have been lost in recent years in Russian and other loans, and every penny of this capital should have gone to the Empire for constructive purposes.

In India and Burma we must say good-bye to the policy of Commissions and Conferences and Acts and political experimentations. We do not hold India by force; 4,000 British officials require over a million Indian helpers in order to keep law and order and maintain daily administrative work. Many of these Indians are sensitive to political unrest. The weak post-war policy has played into the hands of the many brands of agitators. We must give due heed to Indian aspirations and their rights to representation, but there must be no further attempts to impose systems suitable only for Europe in the Indian Empire, where conditions are unique and require special solutions. The ideas held in England about India by many radical writers and politicians are simply ludicrous. Here as elsewhere it is necessary to understand the East before meddling with its affairs.

The Indian Government must extend its sovereignty to the Durand Line in the north-west, as to-day the imperial writ does not run between "British India" and the Indo-Afghan frontier. After leaving Peshawar there is no settled administrative area until the Afghan border, although "No Man's Land" is politically British territory. Many of the savage tribes in the area do not recognise British rule, and there has been serious trouble there for many years. We can have no alternative solution here to a policy of giving an ordered administration to the area, for this has been a neglected duty for many years. Apart from reasons of honour

and prestige, there is the safety and welfare of the continually raided natives to consider.

Much more attention must be given to the Colonies in Parliament than at present, where only an hour or two each session is allotted, in an almost empty House. The very success of our administration has produced this result—peace and progress do not make news. But it must never be forgotten that Britain without the Colonies would cease to be a Great Power in the eyes of Europe, and our annual trade with the Colonial Empire, leaving India and the Dominions on one side, is over five hundred millions sterling. The Colonies must also have power to nominate and elect people who could act as spokesmen of their grouped constituents to the Imperial Parliament, if necessary.

Members of Parliament must also be made to study colonial needs and problems, a number being appointed to study each colony, so that they would be able to speak with expert knowledge and not as at present, from sketchy " briefs " hastily prepared from books in party offices.

Towards the League of Nations, which is the second great experiment in international government—the British was the first and overwhelmingly more successful —our policy must be one of activity and correction. The League was the answer of striving humanity to the horrors of war. Throughout its career it has been seriously hampered by the fact that its successes in preventing war and social evils made poor publicity material, while every defeat was shouted from the house-tops.

From its birth the League was in difficulties through the French desire to make it an instrument for maintaining the impotence of Germany. This would have made an international police force a tool of France—a fact well recognised abroad. The absence of Russia, Germany, and the United States also helped to destroy the hopes of President Wilson and Colonel House, who were hoping to extinguish war hate and settle all

future disputes at Geneva. Wilson's fourteen points, now forgotten, really did represent the views of the ordinary man throughout the world better than anything else published at this time.

The failure of the Allies to disarm and the denial of equality of rights gave Germany a legitimate grievance—her only one—and the successes of the League in social work and war-prevention were obscured when its authority was flouted. The post-1931 defeats were so serious that it is now clear that a new machinery is necessary. The existing constitution, tied to the Versailles Treaty, must be scrapped, to be replaced by a new one substituting executive for advisory authority. The International Labour office, which has done excellent work in suppressing drugs and improving health and labour standards all over the world, should be maintained. The League should be ruled by an executive vested with plenary authority, limited to the great powers, who should have one representative each. If Japan, the United States, Germany, and Italy refuse to join, the League should be continued under British-French control as before. Economic sanctions should be automatic as before in all cases of aggression, with military, naval, and air intervention after fourteen days by all associated states. An international general staff would be organised at Geneva, under British leadership, as due to the world's greatest power, and a League staff college and officers' training college opened. Countries would be assessed in advance as to the Naval, Military, and Air quotas required, and all would be bound by the small executive. The fact that fifty nations were prepared to support British intervention against Italy in 1935–36 is a sufficient proof of the support that would be given to a British lead for organising real collective security.

Threats of aggression, on the decision of the League Supreme Council, would also be dealt with by immediate punitive measures. Thus in the case of the Abyssinian war, the mere closing of the internationally administered

Suez Canal early in 1935 would have prevented hostilities.

The new League would claim and exercise world authority whether or not acknowledged by certain individual states, and would transcend national rights. British leadership would ensure peace and justice, and indeed, no other leadership would be acceptable to the smaller countries. Our armed strength would guarantee the success of the plan and League armed forces must of necessity be much greater than that of any combination of non-League states, if such existed.

Provision would be made for League functions to be expanded to include the political federation of Europe and eventually of the whole world, for civilisation is in course of rapid development towards a superior order, and war can only in the end be abolished by the organisation of the world-state.

The world-state appears far ahead, but it must be remembered that a fourth of the world is already in the British international Commonwealth, which must be open to-morrow as yesterday to all peoples requiring our guidance and protection.

Britain's destiny is to give peace to the world—a work already sanctified by the blessing of the Almighty which has crowned our struggles with success since the Empire was founded by the Puritans. Cromwell was the real founder of the Commonwealth—a very pattern of any Englishman, in whom all the heroic virtues of the island race found full expression. In the name and faith of Jesus the Puritans destroyed tyranny for ever in the land, though the head of a king had first to roll, and saved Europe from military tyranny. By his religious faith and will Cromwell made Ironsides out of poor labourers. We still salute his motto of "Thorough." He believed in the ordinary man—in the broad masses to whom he gave self-confidence and courage—himself rooted in the very soil of the green land. Over the history of the last three centuries his

shadow falls like that of a giant oak. In that shade everything that is most worth while to civilisation has flourished. His life work was the destruction of an old and corrupt order—and the founding of the world's first democracy. Cromwell died and with him the superstructure of the Protectorate, but his work and his name and the spirit of the Puritans will never die. It is still alive and vital in old England and in her sons. Working in their spirit, with their fanatical zeal and energy and remorseless sense of duty and discipline we must spend our lives in destroying the forces of evil at home and abroad, in laying the foundations of international government and peace.

To the evil and cynical world theories of Communism and Fascism we shall oppose a new world theory—world progress and peace maintained by the forces of right. All over the world humble men and women in their despair and weakness cry out their hatred of war, asking for help from the strong and the free. Our mission is to give peace to the world—to banish the horrors of war even if we have to hunt them with a fiery cross to the ends of the earth. In fulfilling this task we shall be living as Jesus of Nazareth would wish us to live.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL POLICY

THE WAR AND THE FLOOD OF NEW INVENTIONS which accompanied and succeeded it made profound changes in the social life of the British people. The cheap car, the motor-omnibus, the radio, the cinema, and the spread of newspaper-reading were the principal factors in these changes. One change which has escaped notice is that the works of the world's greatest minds are now available to millions of young workers, so that the culture which was the prerogative of the few in 1914 may be found in the humblest homes.

Drunkenness has ceased to be a national failing, but on the other hand gambling has greatly increased and has been extended to new sports. Science has made great strides, but the scientific mysticism of certain *savants* shows their recognition of the limitations of mere intellectual perception.

The scientific rationalism of the Victorian era was succeeded by a frightful moral and spiritual upheaval after 1914. Before the war the churches were fairly well filled, but to-day they are nearly empty. By way of counter-attack various new movements came into being, none of them successful in winning back the broad masses to the churches. I have had unusual opportunities of seeing many of these movements at close quarters, and am familiar with the needs of the people seeking spiritual guidance from them. Thus in New York I met Father Divine, the negro preacher who claims divine origin, and who is blindly followed by tens of

thousands of coloured and white people in the city. I saw Divine in "Heaven No. 1," in Harlem. He was eating a banana, and his talk was only involved verbiage, but this did not lessen the hysterical fervour of his followers, who would have torn me to pieces at a word from him.

In Britain the masses have in general renounced conventional church-going, and I cannot blame them. The fault is that of the organised churches, which played such an ineffectual part in the war, and afterwards failed to bring the living message of Jesus to the people. The young workers going to church are asked to pray for mercy for sins they have not committed, to prostrate themselves in humility and generally debase themselves. All this is only a caricature of Christianity. Many preachers adopt an absurd sing-song voice or accent which at once and needlessly antagonises the sub-conscious minds of their hearers. Their method of presentation is often ridiculous. Instead of relying on the beautiful and simple words and ideas of the Nazarene workman—so limpid that they are effective in every language—they wander off into involved justifications of the legends of unimportant Jewish tribes and advertisements of the scholarship which has destroyed their capacity for thought.

Bishops and others make foolish excursions into politics, with unfortunate results, and the attitude of many church nobles to the problems of unemployment and poverty shows that they have led too easy a life themselves. The system of training in the theological colleges apparently pays little attention to preaching, which is, of course, of supreme importance. Jesus himself was a working man, raised among workers, speaking continually at open air and indoor meetings during his short manhood. Prostitutes, publicans, and sinners were among his converts ; and his disciples, who were to build the church which changed the face of the world, were all working men. There was never anything involved about his teaching, which can all

be understood by very young children. What had he in common with wealthy church aristocrats and clergymen whose education and training removes them from the masses? Any unbiased person reading the reports of Jesus's speeches and meetings in the New Testament must come to the conclusion that if he was alive to-day he would be the first to purge a church in decay. The living spirit has in too many cases been replaced by forms and symbols and useless conventions. We must never forget that Jesus was not a priest.

As for the twisters of doctrine and the jugglers with exegesis and scientific theories, the less said about them the better. They are only charlatans protected by the law.

Nevertheless, there are still thousands of earnest men in the Christian pulpits, who are striving to live according to their conscience and in the light of Jesus's teaching. Their task is not to modernise Christianity, but to Christianise modernity.

For the need of the Christian spirit and faith is as great as ever to-day, when it is challenged by the atheist world and by a more dangerous indifference. The people are still Christian at heart—probably more so than ever before—and there is no lack of Christian virtues. They *need* spiritual sustenance and guidance and this can only be achieved through the reaffirmation and application of the principles laid down by Jesus of Nazareth.

In Palestine I obtained a new insight into the extraordinary birth of our religion. The New Testament became terribly alive and its characters were everywhere around me, for they are eternal. The stiff formalism of organised religion dissolved like a mirage on these stony hills. I thought of the poor young man, betrayed by the world, on whose innocent and tempestuous life the shadows were darkening two thousand years ago. What had the professional God-sellers in common with this friend of the poor, the sick, the ignorant, the unfortunate and the gaol-birds? Nothing. Nothing.

Only a symbol. Jesus himself has rebuked these professionals with icy words—" Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? " (Luke 6, 46.)

The penetrative effect of Jesus's words, which reach right down into the hearts of those who hear them, has been in no wise diminished by the centuries. Those churchmen who do not appreciate this cardinal truth are digging the graves of their organisations, for in religion, as in politics, the masses can sense sincerity.

Fortunately, there is still time to bring Christianity into the homes and hearts of the people, still time to restore that high sense of Christian duty which has played such a great part in our development as a nation.

Christianity is needed to combat the rise of immoral ideas which has been so apparent in recent years. Family ties, seriously weakened since the war, must be strengthened and the loose theories which range over the whole field of conduct and morals must be abandoned. These theories have been reflected in art and literature by the Surrealists. Cubists, Freudians, Behaviourists, Communists, and Obscurantists, whose theories and franknesses are convenient excuses for immorality, selfishness, and weakness of all kinds.

The influence of the school as educator has been largely replaced by the cinema and the Press, and this has brought new dangers. Communist and disguised Communist publications have now a considerable circulation, which they are increasing by the use of every device of clever advertising. Many of the films shown to-day are based on an unsound morality and others are subtle vehicles of a poisonous propaganda.

The weakness of the educational system is very obvious. To begin with, there is no equality of opportunity, although this is clearly necessary if we are to obtain the best results. The so-called " public " schools are in fact reserved for the children of the wealthy, and while all these children can enter a university, only one child in two hundred and eighty-six can do so from the elementary school Is there any reason for

thinking that the children of the rich are cleverer than those of the poor? If there is, it has escaped my observation. Undoubtedly, everyone is not fitted for a prolonged education, but this applies with equal force to all children in the State.

As long as fees are charged in secondary schools, secondary education will also continue to be a minority privilege. There must be equal access to the universities for everyone in the State. Intellectual qualifications alone should be considered, and no one with these should be barred on financial grounds.

New post-primary schools would form a part of the secondary system, and would thus open a direct road to the university from the infant school.

The curriculum must also be drastically revised. Its failures are patent. To-day children are stuffed with indigestible facts and subjects which they forget within a year of leaving school. Several of the subjects taught in elementary schools can well be left to another stage. It is a deepening, not a broadening of the curriculum that is required.

Because of the multiplicity of subjects, far too little stress is placed on physical education, though this is obviously one of the most important functions of the school in an urbanised state. We must lay the foundations of a physically fit nation in the schools, and the school training must also be linked to a nation-wide network of gymnastic and sports organisations. In the country which is looked to by the whole world as the home of sport it should not be necessary to stress this point. The modern state which does not actively promote the physical education of all its citizens is failing in its duty.

The healthy habits learned in youth will be retained through adult life and will form a character-building spirit that will be of the highest value. In this connection it is with shame that we must confess that to-day we lag far behind several continental countries.

The conception of authority must be restored to the

teacher. To-day thousands of them dare not adequately correct a misbehaving child in fear of "modern" parents and committees. Many schools are run on lines of "free discipline." All this is wrong, and it is no wonder that there are so many psychological misfits. Children require discipline, as wiser generations knew very well, and the namby-pamby attitude of foolish parents, who allow their children to run wild, can only be corrected in the school. Teachers must be respected by their pupils if education is to be a success.

And in general it can be said that while the great mass of children will never reach the university they can be given an adequate mental preparation for the world, from which they can themselves advance later if they wish, and every child can be taught the rules and practice of health and fitness. We do not want a nation of bookworms but of strong and brave people, who can look to the future with eyes that are unafraid. And the "public school spirit" of loyalty and honour, which has never been the exclusive property of any minority, must saturate the entire system.

Every child must also be taught to respect the Empire and properly instructed in its history, organisation, and mission. Far too many people to-day are ignorant of the most elementary facts about this. Some who cannot even name the capitals of our great Dominions, are very knowledgeable about Russian geography!

All teachers who are unwilling to undertake this regular instruction in Empire subjects, who corrupt these lessons, or who are not themselves loyal in every respect to the Commonwealth and its mission must be swept out of the schools. To-day there are many poisoners of the mind in front of blackboards. Let these classroom Bolsheviks be shown no mercy!

After the school—the classes of social life. The democratisation of education is only one of the foundation stones of a classless society. Communism and Fascism have both had great opportunities of

creating such a society. In both cases old classes, injustices and privileges have simply been replaced by new ones.

In Britain to-day, in spite of the gigantic human and economic resources at our disposal, there are eighteen million workers whose earnings are under £250 a year. A comparative handful of 100,000 people take 16 per cent of the whole national income. Not one person in 200 in London owns any land, although one peer alone owns 270 acres of the enormously valuable West End! Such examples could, of course, be multiplied by the thousand, but it is not necessary to stress the obvious. A mere sharing of existing wealth or land would not create a classless society, nor is it even possible to eradicate the mental servility of certain sections in a few years. What those of us who love the British Commonwealth and its people wish to see is *equality of opportunity*—which may sound trite or vague but in fact embraces everything that is cried out for by the millions of unlucky, oppressed and sorrow-carrying people throughout the State. When I want to know what the masses are thinking I have only to look into my own heart and mind, for essentially I am part of them in every respect—in blood, race, brain and spirit.

This marvellous people of ours with their strange history, dwarfing that of imperial Rome herself, does not believe that all men are equal. History gives the lie to this thesis of the Communists. Men are in reality terribly unequal—a single Cecil John Rhodes is worth more than a million humble yes-men, content only to eat, work, and breed. The death of Colonel Lawrence in a motor-cycle crash was a far more serious blow to the Empire than a big strike. I believe in personality, not in theories and committees and commissions—three plagues which have grievously oppressed the twentieth century.

Though I believe and am of the masses I and they know that they are unfitted to govern *as masses*. The

great mass of the people have had no training in government and administration. Nor do they seek it. What do they know of economics, the gold standard, foreign exchange? Nothing. But the masses have a marvellous power of selection. Here I am not, of course, speaking of voting-blocks and silly formulæ, but of something very different.

In practice it works like a strange, subconscious force of destiny. The masses may make mistakes sometimes in this way, and do, but in the end this mysterious selection process will be justified. History itself approves this in its record of humanity's struggle from savagery.

The masses prove their essential wisdom in their belief in *personality*, and the greatest party will crumble if it lacks the *men*. The masses always prefer the honest and sincere and courageous men, even if they demand sacrifices, to the cynical or ornamental mongers of burgled epigrams and theories.

Ideas and policies are not enough. These alone can win the intellectual approval of the over-educated intelligentsia, but in the struggle for power, these ladies and gentlemen play only spectators' parts. The theorist and the man of action are only joined once in a thousand cases, and it is not the meek humanitarian or the bookworm with his academic certificates who moves the world, but the armed prophet.

It was not the scribes and priests who led the Jews out of captivity in Egypt, but the child of storm, Moses ; it was not a philosopher who organised these people into a nation, but the shepherd David ; not a learned doctor who founded Christianity, but the worker Jesus ; not a wealthy sheikh who gave the East a fighting faith, but the unknown camel-driver Mohammed.

Everything great in the world has been done by personalities—individual men and individual women. It is no accident that we have been described as a nation of individualists. We must restore this belief in the individual as opposed to the Committee. Too many people think democracy means a committee—

the bigger the better. But there is nothing a committee can do that some individual cannot do better—if he can only be found. The problem is not to be solved by examinations or votes, but by *selection.*

Democracy does not exclude, but actually *demands* leadership, and in every walk of life—in the State, the factory, the farm, the ship, the church, the school, the home—and the function of leadership is to lead, not to dance on tight-ropes. We have had too many straw bosses and word-bloated committees of late years. Some of these would apply their "democracy" to an Atlantic liner, making one general committee of crew, officers, and passengers, in which the captain's would be only one of a thousand bawling voices.

The democracy we love and defend has always found its true expression in *leaders*—Hampden, Pym, Cromwell, Cobden, Disraeli, Gladstone, Rhodes, Washington, Lincoln, Garibaldi, Danton, Bunyan. Rule by men in lumps always ends in chaos, as it would on a ship or train. This is why the Communists, who work for anarchy and revolution, always talk so much about "proletarian rights" and committees. Their hatred of the individual is part of their conspiracy against democracy and efficiency.

All over Britain to-day—at the street-corners, in cinemas, in welfare halls, in public libraries, gymnasia, educational groups, in field and factory and poor little box-tenements there are tens of thousands of splendid folk, eating their hearts out because they are denied not food, not shelter, not clothes, but *opportunity.* The jobs, the places, the leadership which should be theirs by reason of the talents and virtues they possess—these are held by men inferior to them—set there by "influence," nepotism, "arrangements," the accident of birth, the accident of an expensive education, or in a dozen similar ways.

In the Britain of to-morrow these inferior ones will be relegated to the modest station for which they were fitted by nature. This is not to say that all our industrial,

social, and national life must suffer an earthquake, for there are many men of talent on the higher rungs to-day, and Socialists must never forget that even born aristocrats sometimes have brain and capacity, just as every working man is not energetic, sober, virtuous, and truthful. But the opening of the way to every talent will mean the greatest advance by humanity since the English Revolution destroyed the remnants of feudalism. We need these talents and qualities—we need these men, no matter where or how they are wasting themselves to-day. To all these unknown, ridiculed, oppressed, poor ones, who have no assets but themselves and hope, I would say—be of good cheer, for you are not alone. Only you can give faith and energy and will to the nation. The past belongs to the old men—let them have it ! The future belongs to you !

The licensed parasites who have preyed so long on the wealth of the nation must be the first to go. The thousands who have made effrontery and social graces a substitute for efficiency and an education must also be driven out. How many have used the names of Oxford and Cambridge and the public schools, disregarding their own undistinguished records, to steer themselves into undeserved comfort ?

In the sphere of social change two of the major tasks confronting us are the proper feeding and rehousing of the workers. A series of reports by medical authorities has revealed to the country the appalling extent of under-nourishment and the chief reasons for the ill-health of the lower-paid and unemployed. It is a blot on our banner that millions of people cannot afford even fresh milk, eggs, and fruit, and the physical unfitness revealed by the recruiting examinations is a national danger in more than one way.

There has been some progress in housing construction in recent years, following the public outcry, but only a new extended and intensified national housing plan can meet the urgent needs of the poor. A Britisher must not live in a hovel. If local authorities refuse or retard

this national work, they should be whipped into submission.

While the sick and the aged must be cared for after their service in industry, there must be no more pampering of the feeble-minded and of those whose physical and mental diseases make them a menace to the community. Idiots must not be allowed to reproduce themselves, and these unfortunates are notoriously prolific. They are useless burdens on a people who must grow strong and virile. Only a false and pallid humanitarianism has enabled them to survive. The Romans exposed such as these to wild beasts. We can be more merciful.

The thousands of both sexes in prison should be employed on national work projects, for which they should be paid at suitable rates. Work and discipline give people strength, self-respect, and remove anti-social brands. The wandering army of able-bodied pauper tramps must be brought back to the community.

We must also have a national medical service for every citizen. To-day thousands of poor people who need medical aid and advice do not seek it until their ailments are seriously advanced—worried about the fees. This in spite of insurance schemes. The doctors themselves would welcome such a plan. They know the faults of the system, which places a premium on gold, only too well.

Tuberculosis should be fought by all the resources of the State in a great campaign. Our greatest wealth is not in our banks or shops but in the lives of our people. Science will enable us to create a physically-fit nation, just as religion and the State will join hands in creating mental and spiritual fitness.

Having crushed the weakness and the insidious and perversive influences that have undermined our churches, the integrity and efficiency of our schools and colleges and the strength of the family, we could set about restoring the old spirit of British character.

In doing this, we must instil into youth a dedicatory passion for the maintenance and extension of British institutions and a resolute resistance to the Bolshevik-Fascist world-plots. For our destiny is not merely to survive, but to succeed.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DEFENCE SERVICES

WE HAVE THE FINEST NAVY, ARMY, AND AIR FORCES in the world, but they are too small to-day to meet the defence needs of the world-wide Commonwealth. As the British Empire is an expanding Commonwealth, which in future years will be asked to admit new states and perhaps federations of states, this position reveals a national and imperial weakness. The position will be improved by the 1937 expansion programme, but the new plan is psychologically and materially inadequate. The nation is not yet awake to the real position. Germany alone spent over £2,000,000,000 on armaments between 1933 and 1936, and is building on a greater scale than ever, to say nothing of other powers.

The British Government's 1937 plan provides only for the expenditure of a sum 25 per cent *less* than the *German* figure—*spread over three years.*

The lack of man-power and the paucity of recruits seriously hamper training work and place us at a serious disadvantage as compared with other countries where military service is compulsory. Thus, as we have seen, in Italy every male is attached to the armed forces from the age of six until he reaches sixty !

There are various reasons for the lack of recruits. One of the most importance is the poor physical condition of so many young fellows, and half of those examined are rejected on these grounds. A new social policy can solve that difficulty, but only over a period of years. Then there is the widespread " out and out

pacifism" propaganda which has been retailed all over the country since 1918. These gentry are as a rule also willing to give away the colonies and they have a habit of talking of "have" and "have-not" nations, and "economic justice." As hardly any of them know anything of economics or the Empire we can dismiss their theories on these subjects. But we cannot dismiss the effects of their speeches. They usually make up in lung-power what they lack in penetration, and are all adept at sketching—inaccurately, I discovered—the horrors of modern air warfare. A good number of them are honest but misguided people—they have simply chosen the wrong road to peace. The disarmament of the Empire that they advocate would be immediately followed by large-scale invasions and the workers, rising in self-defence to defend their territories, would be butchered. The Empire would collapse, and humanity's progress would be set back by centuries. However pure-hearted and sincere the pacifists may be, they can hardly expect Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Goering, and company to be "changed" in a night. The only thing that impresses an ambitious demagogue or a bully is a big stick. What was true at school is just as true in politics, a profession which, indeed, attracts people who have never grown up.

If the Government took the nation into its confidence it would soon attract the necessary number of recruits. No post-war Government, however, has had the courage to do this, in spite of protests from responsible public men. Instead, there have been ill-advised schemes for providing such attractions as hot-water bottles, central heating, and "villa barracks," etc. The publicity given to these ideas reveals an almost incredible misunderstanding of the British mentality. As an excuse, the people responsible say that they are appealing to a different type of young man nowadays. What an insult! All of us have only to recall the marvellous comradeship and the heroic sacrifices of the whole nation in the Great War—when men joined up not to

get hot-water bottles but to face Death himself in his most ferocious guise.

Certainly living conditions for the men in the forces should be continually improved, but I do not believe that considerations of this kind have influenced a single man in the services. Lord Kitchener, who had already proved himself one of our ablest generals, was successful in his appeal for men in 1914 because he was himself a soldier and knew that men join the defence forces to *serve* their country—not to be served by it. And the men of to-day are the sons of the men of 1914—the same blood, the same spirit. Recruits will never be won by bribes in this country. If any are, they are not worth having.

If the nation is *trusted* with the real facts of the situation —there has been a cloak of reticence on the part of Ministers for several years—and asked to make sacrifices for preserving peace, it will respond as it has always done in the past.

But every year lost has played into the hands of the little-Englanders and the people who are plotting the overthrow of the Empire. The Abyssinian war revealed the obligations of collective security in shocking nakedness, and the failure to prepare the minds of the people for these obligations. For peace is like everything else worth winning—a prize requiring preparation, discipline, and struggle.

By August 24, 1914, the French armies had been beaten with a loss of a quarter of a million men, and the Germans were pushing rapidly towards Paris. The German High Command was absolutely certain that Paris would be captured. The small British army on the northern flank of the 250 miles battle front—which numbered only six divisions out of a hundred on the fighting front—held up the German advance, and with bulldog courage, and greatly assisted by German headquarters mistakes, as we learned afterwards, stopped the avalanche long enough for the French to bring up reinforcements.

Lord Roberts had for years warned the British Government about the coming war and the necessity for training adequate reserves. In the event, we had to build up a citizen army, sent out only half-trained from absolutely raw civilian material—a prodigious task fraught with dreadful danger.

To-day we are in a relatively worse position. Our commitments and defence frontiers by land, sea, and air are immensely greater than in 1914, and foreign armies are also much larger and better organised than the German forces in 1914. And to-day Germany is only *one of a number* of powers ambitious of expansion at our expense.

The navy, which defeated the Germans at Jutland and conquered the terrible U-boat menace, was paid little attention after the war, and there were continual reductions in the estimates, while no attempt was made to make use of the splendid officers and men in our great Merchant Navy, in a scheme of co-operation with the senior service. Our commitments and dependence on sea power demand that we must always have the greatest and most efficient navy in the world. The work of the navy is to police the seas of the world, and police duties cannot be efficient unless they are backed by adequate force.

To-day our air force, which should obviously be the largest in the world—several of our military forces in the Middle East have been disbanded and their police duties are carried out entirely by the R.A.F.—does not occupy first place in the world list, so far as numbers and aeroplanes are concerned. That Germany, a Central European power without colonies and dominions, should have a larger air force and thousands more pilots than we have shows the seriousness of this position.

No intelligent man, no matter how radical his views, can deny that the immense lands and frontiers of the Empire make it absolutely necessary for us to have a permanent superiority in defence forces, to say nothing of our responsibilities in building collective security

and maintaining the balance of power, and leaving out of account the open threats now directed to the Commonwealth from abroad.

How important this problem is can be recalled from a study of recent history, for even uncentralised, federal, untotalitarian, Hohenzollern Germany came within a hair's-breadth of victory in 1914, without important allies.

In our democracy we give equality of rights before the law and in the State. The State must in return demand equality of service and sacrifice. Governments afraid to take the people into their confidence are confessing their failure to educate the people in the duties and responsibilities of British citizenship. And these other pacifists who say it is wrong to take human life, but are prepared to pay other people to kill their enemies and protect their pacifist skins, must be shown that they have fallen into grievous error.

It seems a far cry from the time when England expected every man to do his duty to the time when every man is expected to want his hot water bottle, but the history book does not bear this out. And those of us who know the people and know the army have other ideas.

I have been in various sections of the Army Reserve for the last seven years, and I know how necessary it is for us to have a large reserve of trained technicians at home to provide the nuclei of new units in the event of a national emergency. No one in Britain thinks of wars of conquest or aggression—we are the only people who have passed beyond that stage. But it is just ordinary common sense to insure against emergencies. "Trust in God," said Cromwell, "and keep your powder dry."

In the army of to-morrow we must make use of the reforms planned by those brilliant military experts, Captain Liddell Hart and Major-General Fuller, who are deserving of high praise for their years of work in exposing errors.

We have many excellent officers who are thoroughly capable of undertaking reform and reorganisational work, but they are handicapped by the anti-publicity prejudices of the services, and the fear of being involved in politics, which is quite understandable.

In the work of reorganisation, the army must have a Commander-in-Chief, an individual to whom soldiers can look up as comrade and leader. The present control by the anonymous Army Council is a handicap. The lack of contact between divisional commanders and their men in the last war presented a psychological difficulty of importance. There are very good explanations, of course, but the matter could be dealt with by leaders of imagination, and actually was in a minority of cases—notably among the Australians.

The present promotion system must be democratised. To-day only a tiny handful of men from the ranks are sent to Sandhurst and Woolwich every year—a mere sop to the idea. Many fine N.C.O.'s tell me they would not take commissions as they could not survive on their pay. This obstacle must be overcome in all the services, for lack of money must not deprive us of born leaders. Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, who in recent years rose from the ranks of the 16th–5th Lancers, is an example of what could be achieved by some of these men. I have met several born leaders among young sergeants and corporals of the post-war army—men of high education, brilliant instructors, and enjoying the respect and admiration of their men. Yet under the present system they cannot hope to obtain commissions, save quartermasters' posts near the end of their service. This is all wrong. At the price of shocking those reactionaries who wish to make the army a fortress of privilege and caste, we must take steps to find the best men and train them for the highest posts.

In our training system we must also encourage initiative—it is stultified to-day. At the beginning of every recent war we have made blunders because battlefields are never like parade grounds, and there

has been far too much parade ground atmosphere about our manœuvres and tactical exercises. In the past our officers and men have often needed a few weeks of war before they wore off the deadening drill-book veneer and recovered their initiative.

The faults of the high command are many, and not new. People have even boasted (untruly) in the past that our armies lose every battle except the last one. This exaggeration has a grain of truth in its recognition of the dreadful muddles that have occurred. The Crimean and Boer wars were appalling examples of administrative weakness, and some of this survives yet. The Gallipoli, Basra, and Tanga landings can be put down to such causes.

It is criminal folly to allow brave men's lives to be thrown away simply through the lack of a steel broom in the highest military circles. There are many men of ability there, but there is also a proportion which should have been retired years ago.

The system of purchasing commissions has been abolished, but a shadow of it survives in units which require a large private income in incoming subalterns. I admire these regiments for wishing to maintain their high traditions and standards, but colonels must learn the elementary truth that talents and a high sense of honour are possessed by quite a few people lacking £600 a year of unearned increment.

Plans for the emergency expansion of the Regular Army must be drawn up, for we must neglect no necessary precautions. It is a fact that in 1914 there was no such plan ! But between August 4 and November 30, 1914, no fewer than 1,250,000 men voluntarily enlisted !

The army is still grossly under-mechanised, and infantry battalions are not only below strength numerically, but are only in a small percentage of cases equipped with the latest mechanical aids demanded by the transformation of offensive weapons.

In the last war the tiny Regular Army of 247,432 men, which was all that we had to police the world,

was dwarfed in size by the monster armies raised in Europe, and before we were finally victorious we had to enlist a total of 8,654,465 men throughout the Empire. Our army is as small as ever to-day, and Italy alone claims to be able to put eight million bayonets into the field on general mobilisation ! These figures give some indication of the problems that have not been tackled.

Military defence precautions must be supported by industrial and economic organisation. The Empire must become a closer economic unity, and a greatly extended and necessary migration to people the great virgin lands of the south and west must be accompanied by a flow of capital and industrial equipment from this country, the richest in the world in money, human material, and technical resources.

I know from my own experiences of " green flag " and " anti-tank area " training that there is much truth in Captain Liddell Hart's declaration that the existing microscopic army is " not an insurance," and there are still absurd prejudices in high offices against tanks and mechanised divisions.

In Palestine we saw the folly and danger of trying to hold long frontiers with skeleton garrisons—due to cheese-paring policy at home. And Palestine could be duplicated by a dozen other cases to-day. It is never the fault of the men on the spot, who know better than anyone else what is required. The ignorant politicians at home, who would make a sorry mess of holding a far frontier against fanatical tribesmen, armed only with prestige and a couple of machine-guns, should be made to listen to the soldiers, sailors, and airmen for a change. These men have been compelled to listen to the windbags and the old women long enough !

Only General Fuller's action saved the Tank Corps from being scrapped after the war ! The development of weapon power means that we must concentrate on power in our preparations. In olden days the army has been an auxiliary of the navy, but to-day the army has an auxiliary of its own in the air force, and only an

effective combination of mechanised land warfare and motorised air warfare will enable us to impose our will on future opponents. We can rely on our navy to retain the command of the seas.

Then work must be found for all men leaving the services—the failure to look after these men is a national disgrace. Thus to-day the yearly average leaving the army is 26,000 men, and several thousands of these cannot find jobs. Vocational training is only available for a minority of those leaving the Colours. Men leaving the services without a civil trade must be taught one at the expense of the State and work must be provided for all skilled men. This is simply an obvious duty of the nation to the men who risk their lives in its service.

CHAPTER SIX

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

BRITAIN'S FIRST DUTY IN REPLANNING HER INDUSTRIAL life is to restore prosperity to the distressed areas. The national distressed areas Commissioner, Sir Malcolm Stewart, in his first report, published in August, 1935, said : " I am more and more convinced that the major problems of the Special Areas cannot be isolated and left to one small department ; they must be tackled by the Government as a whole. . . ." This conclusion, which will be echoed by every sufferer in the areas, has not, of course, led to any action. Britishers do not want doles or cast-off clothing—they want work, and work must be provided for them. A temporary licensing system for new factories would be sufficient to settle the matter within three years. As it is, capital and plant that should go by rights to the great industrial areas of the north and Wales come to the London area. In the London suburbs in recent years enough new factories, nearly all of which could be operated with equal efficiency in the distressed areas, have been erected to absorb every unemployed man in the stricken counties. The factory owners would not suffer by the licensing system, on the contrary they would gain by the new purchasing power in the hands of the workers and the proximity to the great resources of the industrial areas, which are as rich as ever.

We must see to it that to-morrow the Labour Exchanges are used as exchanges of labour, not as dole

pay offices, where men are given a pittance by cowardly Governments as an insurance against revolution.

The present drift of industry into the thickly populated London area is socially and economically undesirable, save in certain cases. Employers seeking for excuses say that rates are too high and labour disputes more likely in the special areas. Where local rates are so high as to antagonise industry, they must be compulsorily lowered through the intervention of the Central Government. In this matter of saving men and women from demoralisation we have no time to argue with local busybodies who get in our way.

With regard to labour disputes, there are various decisive arguments against the contentions of the employers. Nevertheless, the danger of strikes is always present in every industry and in every part of the country. I have been in several strikes in this country and abroad, and know what fearful forces can be set in motion in a great dispute. My experience as a worker and organiser of workers has convinced me that we must banish strikes from our civilised society. In 1926 we had a terrible example of what a strike can cost in lost money, trade, disorganisation of the State, and ruined workers and tradesmen. In saying that strikes must be banished I do not mean that the workers must disarm themselves of their rights and arms and leave themselves at the mercy of unscrupulous slave-drivers. I know the workers, and I know the employers, and I know that the overwhelming majority of them are united in opposition to clashes and direct action. It is the tiny minority of self-seeking agitators and pig-headed bosses who have started most of our recent industrial battles.

All industrial disputes should be submitted to arbitration boards, which should have clear-cut and legal powers of enforcing their decisions. Employers and workers alike who refuse to accept these decisions should be given short shrift. We cannot allow a handful of Communist agents—and there are Communist agents

in every big plant in Britain—to bring misery into the homes of thousands of decent hard-working men and women.

As to the composition of these arbitration boards, they must obviously include men of experience in the industry and area dealt with. Experience and capacity must be the chief qualifications, and as the arbitrators must be paid by the State they will have that prestige to reinforce their legal powers of compulsory arbitration, binding on all parties. Such boards would not create a new class of interfering bureaucrats—we have seen enough of that type—as they would only mediate when a crisis had actually arisen in some particular plant.

Only by banishing strikes and Communists can we deal adequately with the continually recurring doctrine of class war with its hatred and violence. Our aim is to build a classless society in which men remain, as before, profoundly unequal in talents and rewards, but equal in rights and duties.

In this building of a new industrial structure for the State—to-day there is only a chaos of styles and scaffolding—we must not recall the pallid spirit of previous experiments. Nor shall we evoke the fantastic paper castles of Italian corporations or Soviet trusts, in which the workers count for less than the dust. In British industry employer and worker must co-operate as friends and comrades. Leadership in industry belongs to the few, as elsewhere, but there must be no bars anywhere against the men who start in the lowest grades. In those factories to-day where the chiefs take a sympathetic and intelligent interest in their men and take them into their confidence there is higher pay, shorter hours, greater efficiency, security, and greater prosperity for the undertakings. This spirit must pervade every plant. An industrial planning commission for the nation with regional boards of advisers can supervise this work. There will undoubtedly be difficulties at first, for some firms are run by financial parasites whose only interest in their men is to suck their

blood, and there are far too many useless people on directorates everywhere.

But, I am confident that the leaders of industry, who have proved their technical and sales capacity, will enter whole-heartedly into the work of bringing the team spirit into working life. In the last few years I have visited many of the greatest works in the country, and have had confidential talks with the managers and directors. Communists are always vilifying these men as reactionaries, but I found the majority of them more socialist and radical in their views about social and industrial change than the leaders of the extremists! This sounds like an exaggeration, and would sound one to me had I not met these men and explored their minds. At great factories in Belfast, London, Nottingham, Chesterfield, Oxford, Liverpool, Kendal, Leeds, Birmingham, Hull, Newcastle and elsewhere, I have heard owners of business, each of them employing several thousand people, talk in terms of a new industrial policy that goes far beyond anything heard in the House of Commons.

These business leaders, who have worked their way to leadership from the ranks and had a lifetime of unremitting toil behind them, were no believers in the politicians. Here they showed their good sense. For no one who sits as a spectator in the Westminster Gallery for only a few minutes can believe that these crowds of elderly men, scuttling out of tunnels at the sound of the division bell to vote in debates they have not heard, about issues mostly outside their limited experience, can produce a national *plan* or a national *will* that will lead us towards prosperity. There are no doubt many able and honest men in Parliament—there always were, even under George III and Charles I—but they are growing as disillusioned and cynical as the pressmen whose arduous and unhealthy task it is to sit through the interminable flow of words.

As things are, Members of Parliament are compelled to make speeches on subjects of which they know

nothing, and in time they begin to think that the mere making of speeches is all that they have to do. But words, of which they have inexhaustible reservoirs, will not accomplish anything by themselves. Parliament must be transformed into a working body—each man specialising in a particular industry or service or part of the Empire. General debates should only be necessary for the larger issues of policy. The ease of obstructive tactics and the belief held by every Opposition that it must *oppose* every move—good or bad—of other parties is bringing Parliamentary procedure and credit into disrepute.

In the Britain of to-morrow every citizen must work. We must replace the *right* to work—in practice denied to millions since 1918—by the *duty* to work. It is a great thing to be a citizen of the British Commonwealth, and there is no room for parasites and workshies. The policy of " bread and circuses "—rightly associated with the collapse of the Roman empire—must be finally torn up.

A continual reduction in working hours is socially desirable and economically practicable. When all our human and economic resources are utilised, the forty-hour working week will be easily applicable. We have always led the world in this reduction of work-time, because of our efficiency, and this will be only another episode in the serial reform begun a century ago.

Our export trade must also be greatly extended to provide markets for the goods produced by industry working at full strength. A high wages policy, which was proved so successful during 1916–18 under war Socialism, will mean a great deepening and broadening of the home market, but the importance of the export trades demands close attention on foreign markets. Our political influence on the Continent and in America and the economic links of Empire will here prove of immense value. So far there has been no large, planned sales attack on many countries which need our goods, and industrial and national leaders travelling abroad

have made some pungent criticisms of this error. Foreign importers have so often said that Germans send agents to them speaking their own language, while if they want British goods they must seek them out themselves. In the Far East, and especially in such places as Shanghai, there have been similar blunders, with the result that more enterprising countries have obtained markets that should be ours by right of superior goods.

It is not necessary here to develop this argument, which is well known to the business people concerned, who have been hampered in the past by the 1925 Government gold decision, the prevalence of foreign "dumping," and the failure of successive Cabinets to give a necessary lead.

Our miners—splendid fellows who risk their lives every day in the industrial struggle—must be given a decent wage and decent conditions of employment. This can only be done by national planning of the industry—advocated by Royal Commissions as long ago as 1919—and price control. The increased demand for coal that will follow the extension of the oil-from-coal process will be only one aspect of the reorganised industry. We must not allow ourselves to be dependent on foreign countries for our essential raw materials. It is a sad reflection on the industry that our men are to-day receiving on an average only 45s. a week for this highly-skilled, arduous, and dangerous work. So far from our foreign markets being lost by increased productive costs, they would be extended, as a price control plan applied nationally would enable us to undertake a general sales drive and also to underbid our competitors, whose coal is notoriously inferior, as we found ourselves in 1926.

In agriculture we must initiate a policy of abundance. That of to-day produces artificial scarcity. Restricted food supplies are supported by heavy subsidies. Neither farmer nor farm worker nor consumer is satisfied.

The farm worker's wages are too low and his living

conditions are still far behind those of the urban worker. His children are denied chances that would be theirs in towns. Necessary public services such as electricity, water, sewerage, telephones, health, cultural and educational opportunity are beyond the reach of the poor rural communities. I know rural England, but this cannot be said of the average town-dweller, for no voice speaks for the farm labourers. There is far too much apathy in the towns about the land. This is an entirely wrong attitude. Townsmen must recognise that agriculture is a highly skilled trade requiring the ablest technicians and craftsmen for its successful progress. Only in time of war has this fact been brought home to the town. And we cannot let our social organisation drift away from our green country-side. Too many desirable things of life are denied the dweller by miles of asphalt and houses. The open air and health-giving recreation must be retained for our people. The appalling vulgarity of advertising and building that is disfiguring the nation must be curtailed. The Anglo-Saxons are not Levantine touts.

The land of Britain must be held in trusteeship by the State for this and future generations, and administered for the common welfare.

Although our population increased by 15,000,000 in the fifty years following 1881, the workers engaged in agriculture decreased by 400,000. The decline continues. In the last 14 years our rural population has dropped by 200,000. This trend must be reversed. New capital must be provided, and our food production vastly increased. A publicity campaign urging the larger consumption of milk and dairy products and healthy foods and the nutritive value of fresh home-grown produce against preserved or desiccated food-stuffs from foreigners must be started, side by side with the new high wages policy.

The drought of 1933–34 showed how unsatisfactory was the water supply organisation. To-day there are nearly 2,000 separate statutory water undertakings in

Great Britain. There is some inter-working, but many places are still dependent on rain water. A third of the rural district councils reported water shortage of varying degree in their districts in 1934.

Clearly the water supply of the country can only be properly conserved and utilised by central water authority. As things are, the rural authorities obviously cannot afford to bear the entire cost of development, and the spreading of charges over wide areas is justifiable on grounds of public health alone, and is already being done with electricity.

Our great industries must also be reorganised and improved for the welfare of all people employed.

The Government of the nation must become a partner in the national business firm, the other partners being labour and capital. These tendencies are already far advanced, for as Government has gone into industry, workers and employers have gone into Government. As yet there has been no attempt to harmonise these elements and the antagonisms cancel out progress. Capital and labour have been drifting apart, since the days of industrial paternalism, on the principle of the control of industry. Clashes are bound to recur between these forces unless order and harmonious co-operation is introduced. Harmony will be brought by the new principle of *Functional Control.*

A formal distinction must be drawn between politics and economics. Politicians are clearly unfitted to meddle with the actual administrative work of industry. That function belongs to the men trained and fitted for it. Functional control will mean the allotment of leadership and power in industry to the men who prove themselves worthy of it, whether from the bottom of the ladder or the middle rungs. The planned industrial state must be managed by its own leaders on this principle of function—the best man for the best job—a principle entirely divorced from politics. The industrial machine must function under its own power in the spirit of co-operation. The citizen House of Commons

must only retain ultimate authority. Functional control —government of industry by the best men of the workers, the technicians and existing managers—is a non-political solution, though it can only be reached through political action. This principle will go far beyond anything proposed to-day by the right wing employers and the left wing workers. Workers' control of industry will be a reality, for the best workers will be given the function of leadership. At the same time no man must be given a post on political grounds—glib-tongued people are often useless at doing a job. And every man in the undertakings of to-morrow must be a worker. To-day some managers work twice as hard and twice as long as their employees. These men have proved themselves worthy of leadership. Throughout industry, technical, administrative, managerial and selling ability must be the only qualifications for responsibility. We have had enough of lockouts and strikes and of shiftless Mahounds of agitators who claim to speak for hard-working men and women.

The function of industry itself is to produce goods and to progressively raise the standard of life of our people. All persons in industry must be imbued with this spirit. There will, of course, be remnants from the bad old days, and a grievance can always be found by a Communist in the best-run and best-paying factory in the world. And there will be leaders who bring with them the grind-them-down viewpoint held to-day by certain American employers. Such people will be legacies from the stormy testament of industrial battle. They must be removed by the State as guardian of peace, in spite of all the clamour of employers about interference with the liberty of the individual. They must remember that liberty involves duties as well as rights.

The forcible prevention of strikes and the introduction of functional control by the workers, including in this term all men and women actually engaged in production and administration, will make it possible for us to create

a planned, efficient and happy industrial state. Only thus can we progressively shorten hours and increase wages and production. Cut-throat tactics and the destructive philosophies of "rugged individualism" and "proletarian dictatorship" will be relegated to the rubbish heaps of history. The compulsory collective bargaining for which we seek is already advocated by the great trade unions, and has been approved by great industrialists. Only the politicians stand in the way.

These measures would, so far from disarming the workers and their organisations, replace the shadow of power with the substance.

So far as I am concerned I owe everything to the workers. I have never regretted the dedication of my life to the victory of Socialism, and I have been faithful to that pledge, made years ago when I was a penniless piece of human drift in a northern gutter, in spite of continual and crushing defeats. But Socialism to me does not involve the suppression of the individual, but the triumph of the individual; the freeing of every class from the shackles of the past and of false beliefs; not the dictatorship of the tyrant, but the flowering of democracy. Primarily, the equality of opportunity based upon the inequality of men. Let us trust that we can reach this goal without bitter struggle. But it is necessary to accept the teachings of history—that no organisation can achieve its purpose in this world without being imbued with a remorseless will to power, absolute, unflinching, and unchallengeable. The road to victory is never strewed with concessions, but with the bodies and ideas of those who stand in the way of national regeneration.

Among sectional industrial measures that are urgently needed are the prevention of exploitation of women and children and the planning of transport. The appalling death roll on the roads can be remedied by new motor roads and the adoption of methods now used abroad. A network of new bridges, new by-pass roads, and the modernisation of existing roads, built for

non-mechanical traffic, would go far to meet present needs. With new road construction must come an architectural revival. In the recent past our architects have achieved little, and many post-war public buildings, with their mixture of styles, are eyesores to the foreign visitor with a more cultivated taste.

Foreigners visiting some of our towns must think us a nation of vulgar barbarians. In this respect we are well behind other nations. But there is no lack of talent, and our institutions and our history must be commemorated in a series of vast and useful edifices, sports grounds, and stadia whose beauty and grandeur will speak to the world and to posterity. This is the best and wisest form of advertisement, and the goods and qualities we are advertising are the envy of the world. Even Fascist Italy, where the highest wages are 50 per cent below our rates, is striving to beautify its big cities with fine buildings. London must be made to look a world capital. It is not enough to be this in practice, and we cannot expect private individuals to perform the functions of the State. So far as money is concerned, we are spending well over a hundred millions a year on keeping the unemployed idle, and have done so for half a generation, to say nothing of the huge additional waste in consequent illness and social repair and the loss of these workers' productive capacity. A loan of £240,000,000 at present interest rates plus amortisation charges would mean an annual charge of less than £9,000,000 a year! And we must not think in terms of such small amounts, remembering what we spent every day during the war on destructive machinery. If we can mobilise the nation for war we can mobilise it for peace!

But we must first of all control finance. The Bank of England must become a public institution—administered by experienced practical men under the general control of the Cabinet. Thus credit will be controlled in the interests of trade and the workers.

The large-scale exploitation of the public by financial sharks must be brought to an end. Most of these gentry

are of foreign extraction and on conviction they should be deprived of their British citizenship. If their countries of origin refuse them we have many tracts of virgin land in the Empire where they can be introduced to the healthy virtues of pioneering. Years of this open air life may even refit them for citizenship.

In the past some of our industries have been ruined by unscrupulous financial manipulators and London is still a haven for bucket-shop keepers and city wolves. These Augean stables must be cleaned and disinfected, for these human vermin batten on the misfortunes of the defenceless workers and the disasters of our commerce. The few who are brought to trial escape with less punishment than an unfortunate toiler driven to robbery by poverty. The financial jugglers, whose sons and daughters provide the most unsavoury features of London society with their abnormalities, have bloated themselves long enough. Let them look out! An awakened nation will deal with them as Cromwell and Ireton dealt with the immoral and useless courtiers and favourites of the Stuarts.

Finance must no longer dictate to the nation—foreign bankers dictated the unemployment and wage cuts here in 1931—but must become the tool of the nation's power. Financial control must be replaced by functional control. And just as the financial public enemies must be dealt with, so too must the monopolists who prey on our shopkeepers, stifling them with their "corners" and sales control. The small tradesman has a necessary and valuable place in our society. When he is oppressed he has no remedy. He is often the repository of the highest conceptions of service, though he is unheard because he is out of politics and has no public representation. We have never been ashamed of being a nation of shopkeepers! And the French dictator who thought he was thus abusing us learned the weight of our fists!

In the British Commonwealth of Nations, which I here name for the first time in its legalistic sense, as

apart from the British Empire, there are different nations, whose peoples are not all of British blood, *freely* associated in a general will to peace and development. Only this general will and philosophy could have strengthened Commonwealth ties over the years. In other federations the common ties and loyalties have weakened with the passage of time. If the Geneva League finally collapses through the immorality of dictators then we must entirely concentrate on extending the League of British Nations—already embracing 500 million humans. The little-England defeatism of the decadent nineteen-twenties gives way to the world philosophy and practice of the expanding Commonwealth. For our task is not merely to bring security and order to these highly industrial and rich islands, but to spread our civilising work all over the globe.

The Almighty has blessed us with skill, intelligence, wealth, and the power to rule. These blessings must be poured out by ardent youth in truly Christian abundance. The oppressed millions all over the narrowing world look to us in these years of trial, as they have done for centuries, not in vain.

Civilisation is threatened to-day by the forces of evil. We must not be content with being civilisation's defender. Justice without force is a mockery, force without justice is tyranny, but the alliance of justice and force can cut the gordian knots that puzzle the peacemakers.

The work set out in this book may seem impossible of achievement in a lifetime to those thinking in terms of to-day and yesterday. But dynamic youth can achieve anything in this twentieth century. And arms will spring to the hands of the Government impelled by a righteous belief. No matter what dark chapters lie ahead and what frightful perils we may yet have to face, what mistakes we shall commit, what evils may be laid to our charge, we shall succeed because we must.

It is not brains that change the world and the hearts of men, but faith. They conquer who believe they can. For the fulfilment of our world mission our young men of the British Commonwealth must work with unrelenting energy, with unbreakable will.

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